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THE
People's Life
of
WILLIAM EWART
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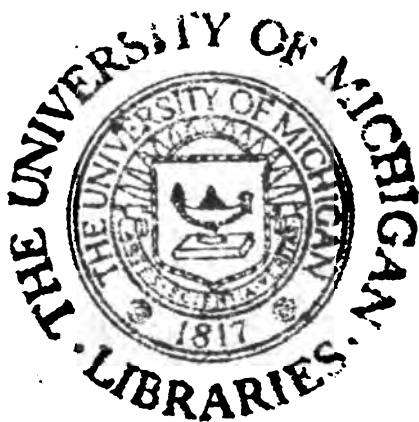
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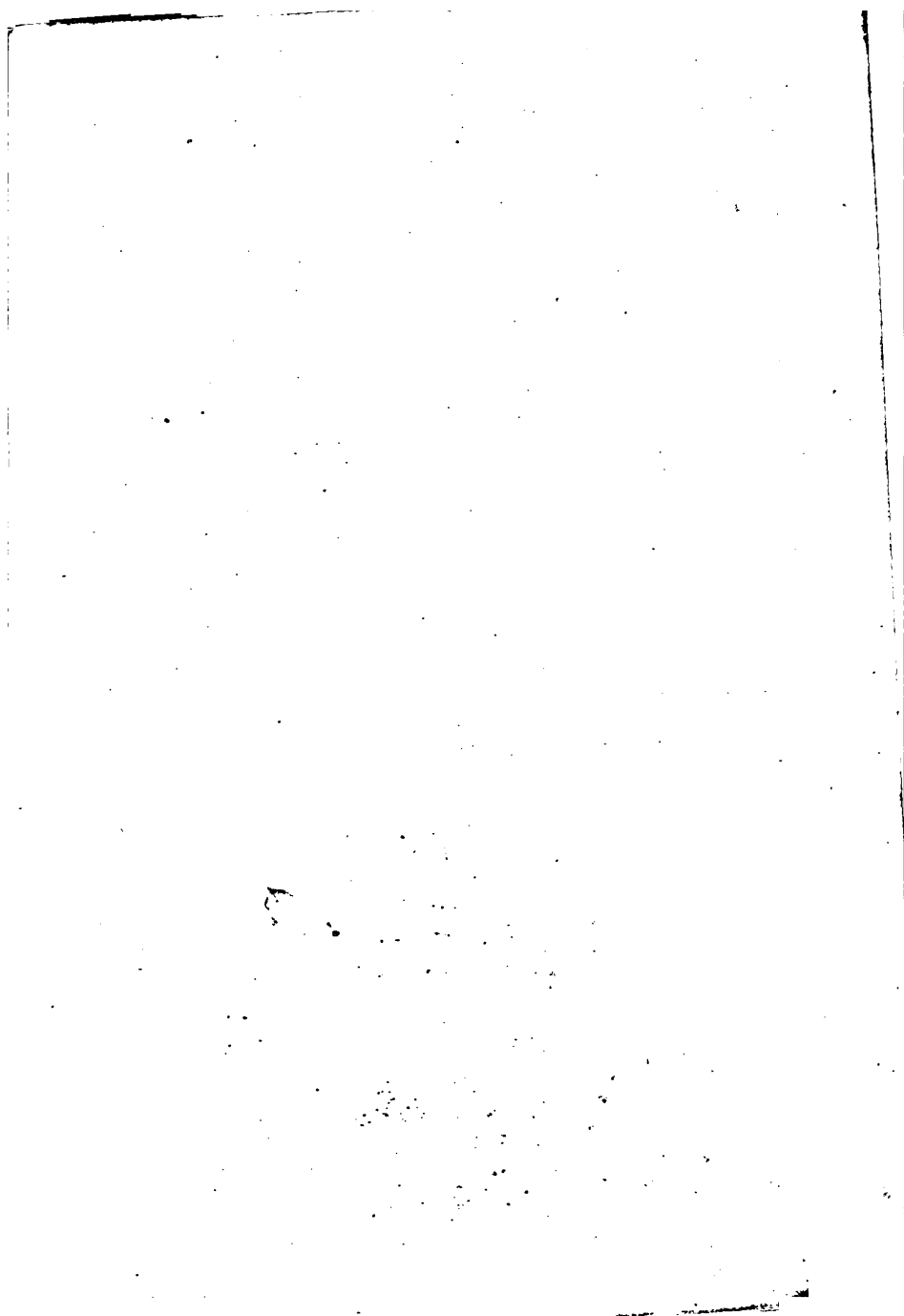


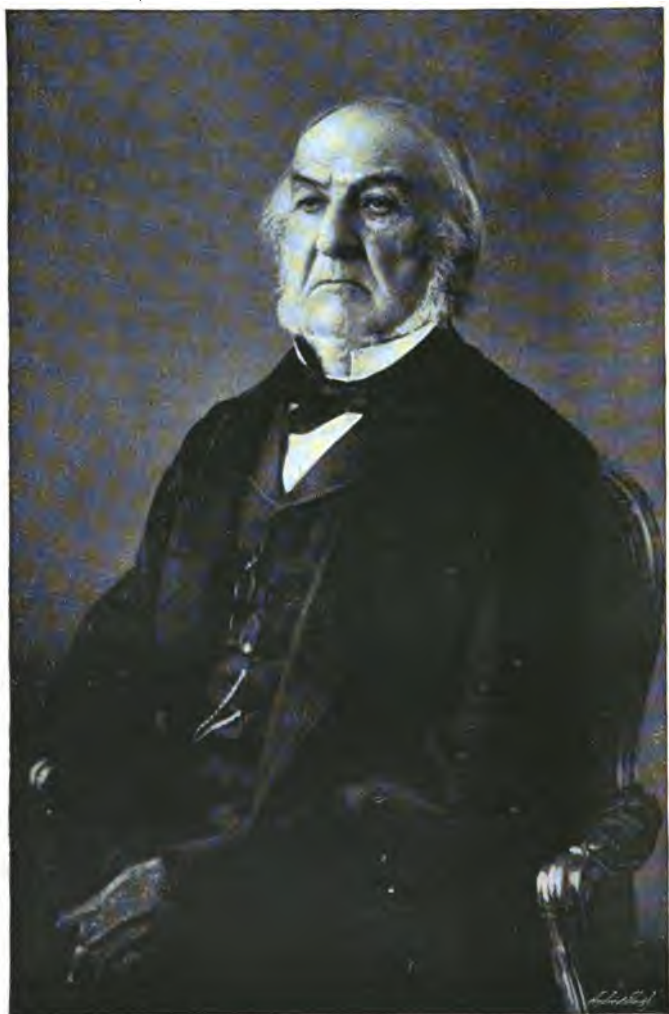
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THE PEOPLE'S LIFE OF THEIR
QUEEN.

By the REV. E. J. HARDY, M.A.
*Chaplain to H.M. Forces, and Author of "How
to be Happy though Married," &c., &c.*

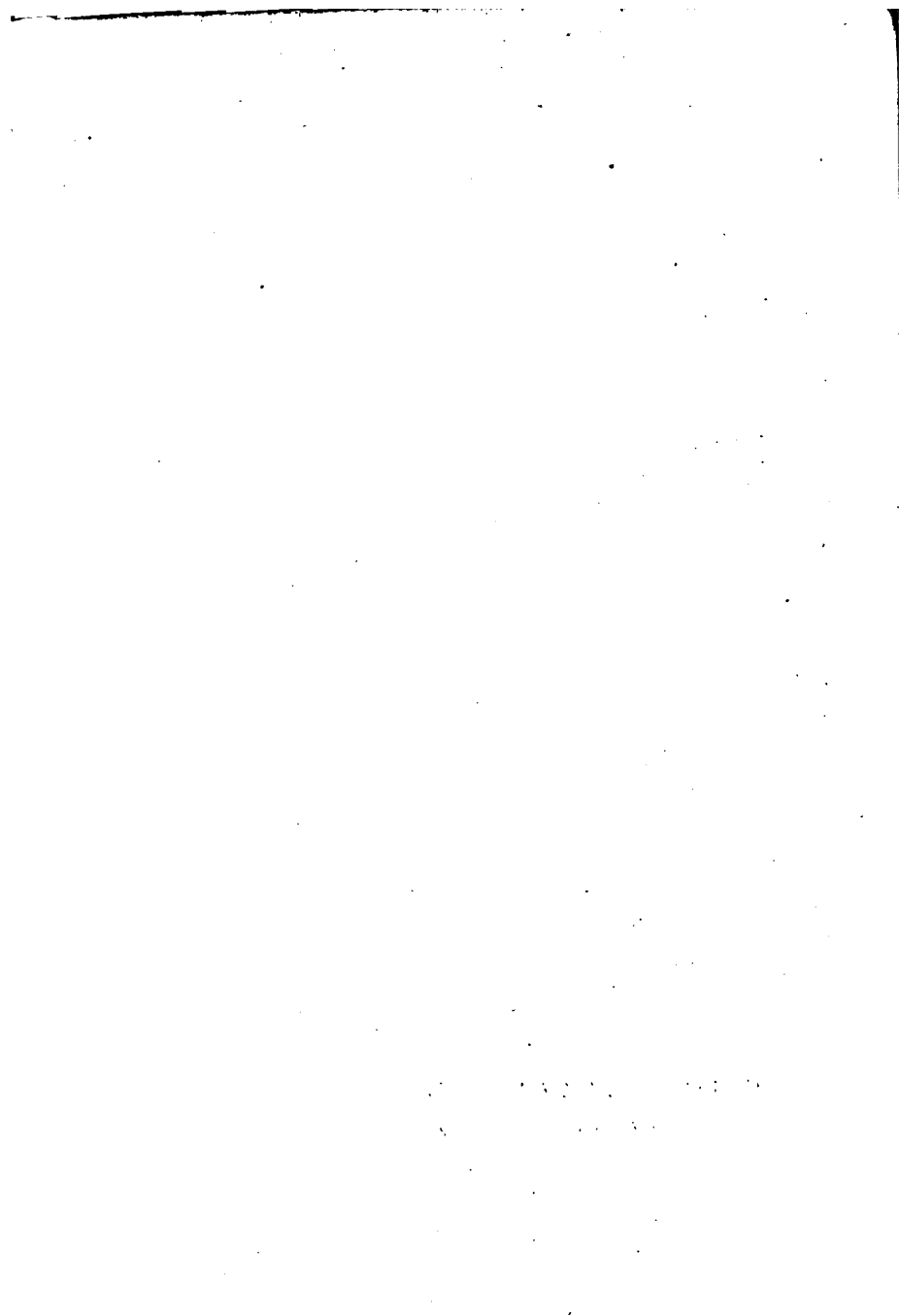






MR. GLADSTONE IN, 1892.

(From a photograph by Samuel A. Walker, 230, Regent Street, W.)





THE PEOPLE'S LIFE
OF
WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

WITH 55 ILLUSTRATIONS

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LIMITED
LONDON, PARIS & MELBOURNE

1895

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NOTE.

A large number of sources have been resorted to for the materials of this book, but the author desires to express his special indebtedness to Mr. Barnett Smith's "Life of Mr. Gladstone"; Mr. G. W. E. Russell's shorter biography; Mr. Justin McCarthy's "History of Our Own Times"; Sir Wemyss Reid's Lives of Lord Houghton and Mr. Forster; the "Life of Samuel Wilberforce, D.D."; Bishop Charles Wordsworth's "Annals of My Early Life"; Mr. H. W. Lucy's "Diary of Two Parliaments"; and Mr. T. P. O'Connor's "Parnell Movement" and "Gladstone's House of Commons."

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WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

CHAPTER I.

ETON AND OXFORD.

Ancestry—Childhood—Early Characteristics—His Father—At Eton—
“Mr. Tipple”—The Eton Fair—Oxford—A “Model Under-graduate”—First Speech at the Union—His Religious Vocation.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE was the fourth son of Sir John Gladstone, Bart., one of the merchant-princes of



SIR JOHN GLADSTONE.

(From a photograph by Mr. T. Edge,
Llandudno.)

Liverpool. He was born in his father's house in that city, No. 62, Rodney Street, on December 29th, 1809.

There occur in Mr. Gladstone's speeches many references to his Scottish ancestry. It was entirely Scottish: on one side Lowland, on the other side pure Gaelic. His grandfather was a corn-merchant at Leith, and his father was born there, but came to Liverpool when a young man, where he started what was to

prove a most prosperous career as clerk in the house of a

merchant whose favourable notice he had attracted. The Gladstones, or Gledstanes, as the name was spelt *Scotice*, had been burgesses of Dundee, before one of them migrated to Leith, and before entering the ranks of trade they had been one of the Scottish families of knightly rank. They owned a property, from which they took their name, near the town of Biggar, in Lanarkshire. Herbert de Gledstane was one of the lairds who swore fealty to Edward I. in 1296. A Sir William de Gledstane fought at Poitiers, but it is not clear that he was an ancestor of his more famous namesake. John Gladstone, the statesman's father, married Anne, daughter of Andrew Robertson, Provost of Dingwall, a member of the Donachie clan. It was from her Mr. Gladstone drew the Celtic imagination, sympathy, and fire, which tempered the solid and practical qualities he derived from his father, and made with them so brilliant and potent a combination.

Sir John Gladstone was an active politician who, as a politician, had a rather troublous career. He began life as a Whig and a Presbyterian, but as the French war developed, and his interests as a ship-owner and Liverpool merchant increased, he went over to Toryism, and at a later period joined the English Established Church, of which he became a munificent benefactor without, however, discontinuing a generous assistance to the Auld Kirk. He sat in Parliament successively for Lancaster, Woodstock, and Berwick-on-Tweed; but for the latter place he was unseated on petition, on charges of treating and other illegal transactions. A slave plantation which he possessed in Demerara was the means of exciting a good deal of prejudice against him in his political contests. But he was "ever a fighter," and bore down opposition stoutly to the end. He lived to be eighty-seven, a "most interesting old man," and saw three of his sons in Parliament.

To an imperious will, an earnest conscience, and an extraordinary energy which the old man bequeathed to his youngest son, he also added an intense love of discussion ; and we think we can see how the foundation of the future Prime Minister's skill as a debater was laid in the following description of the Gladstone home, which we owe to Sir Francis Doyle :—

" Nothing was ever taken for granted between the father and his sons. A succession of arguments on great topics and small topics alike—arguments conducted with perfect good humour, but also with the most implacable logic—formed the staple of the family conversation. The children and their parents argued upon everything. . . They would debate as to whether the trout should be boiled or broiled, whether a window should be opened, and whether it was likely to be fine or wet next day. It was all perfectly good-humoured, but curious to a stranger because of the evident care which all the disputants took to advance no proposition, even as to the prospect of rain, rashly." *

Mr. Gladstone passed his childhood not at Liverpool chiefly, but at Seaforth, where his father had a residence, near the mouth of the Mersey, in sight of Wales. He often galloped along the "four miles of the most delightful sands I ever knew," which then divided the suburb from the great city, which has since absorbed it. One of his early recollections was to have been taken over by his mother, when he was about four years old, to visit Hannah More, who gave him one of her little books for children, because,

* An amusing anecdote is told *apropos* of these dialectics. On one occasion the future Prime Minister and his sister Mary disputed as to where a certain picture ought to be hung. An old Scotch servant came in with a ladder, and stood irresolute while the argument progressed. At length, as Miss Mary would not yield, her brother gallantly ceased from speech, though unconvinced. The servant then hung up the picture where the young lady ordered, but when he had done this he crossed the room and hammered a nail into the opposite wall. He was asked why he did this. "Aweel, miss, that will do to hang the picture on when ye'll have to come round to Master Willie's opeenion."



THE HOUSE IN WHICH MR. GLADSTONE WAS BORN, 62, RODNEY
STREET, LIVERPOOL.

(From a photograph by Messrs. Brown, Barnes & Bell.)

she said, "he had just come into the world and she was just going out." At Seaforth, before being sent away to school, he used to go to the Vicarage for tuition.

It was even during these early years that he received that strong Tory bias which was to cling to him through the first period of his political life. "I was bred," he said once,



THE PLAYING FIELDS, ETON.

when a Liberal Minister, in reply to a taunt of Disraeli's, "under the shadow of the great name of Canning ; every influence connected with that great name governed the politics of my childhood and of my youth." His father was Canning's personal friend, and was a chief means of having him returned for Liverpool. It was a time when men who had made a fortune by their own exertions, like Sir John

Gladstone, turned naturally to the sort of Toryism which Canning professed. Insecurity and depression weighed upon the country, and revolution was in the air. The French war was not over while little William was trotting around paying visits with his mother. He was born in the year of Wagram, and one of his early recollections, he tells us, was, during a visit to Edinburgh in 1814, hearing "the glass of the windows of the Royal Hotel rattle to the guns of the Castle as they announced one of the great victories over Napoleon the First." Toryism was the political gospel taught in the Gladstone household, and those who would estimate the force of character which the future Liberal leader showed in wrenching himself free from this early bias must bear in mind also that there was nothing in his subsequent education either at school or college to check its force.

At eleven he was sent to Eton—"the prettiest little boy that ever went to Eton," writes Sir Francis Murchison. That great school, with its incomparable associations, cast its spell over him wholly, and he never ceased to be an enthusiastic Etonian. His record is that of a model boy—a "sap," as the school phrase is. One of the most saintly of English ecclesiastics, Bishop Hamilton of Salisbury, declared that he was saved at Eton from growing idle and vicious "by getting to know Gladstone." His influence over other companions was not less marked, and his pre-eminent powers were even then recognised. Arthur Hallam, Tennyson's friend, the hero of "In Memoriam," says: "Whatever may be our lot, I am confident that *he* is a bud that will bloom with a richer fragrance than almost any whose early promise I have witnessed." He supplemented the ordinary school lessons by working hard at mathematics in the holidays. He was a good classic, and his sonorous

declamation was often put in requisition by the masters when it was desirable to edify the class with translation or quotation of some thrilling passage of Homer or Virgil.

It was by no means all work and no play with him, however. Though he was undistinguished in the school games, he was fond of sculling, and kept a boat of his own. "I sculled constantly," he once wrote; "almost more than any other boy in the school. Our boats then were not so light as they now are, but they went along merrily, with no fear of getting them under water." He was, moreover, a great walker, and, with congenial friends, spent many a leisure hour exploring the country around Eton. Some of these friends and he set up a "Salt Hill Club." "We met every whole holiday or half," writes one of them, "and went up to Salt Hill to bully the fat waiter, eat toasted cheese, and drink egg-wine." Astonishing to say, at these meetings Gladstone went by the name of "Mr. Tipple." He was capable, too, of a *bon mot*. In those days, as in more recent times, the youth of Eton took an interest in the Derby, and Sir Francis Doyle relates an incident which is equally illustrative of that fact and of Gladstone's readiness at giving witty expression to what were then his political predilections: "One day I was steadily computing the odds for the Derby as they stood in a morning newspaper. He (Mr. Gladstone) leant over my shoulder to look at the lot of horses named. Now it happened that the Duke of Grafton owned a colt called Hampden, who figured in the aforesaid lot. 'Well,' cried Mr. Gladstone, reading the odds, 'Hampden at any rate is in his proper place, between *Zeal* and *Lunacy*,' for such, in truth, was the position occupied by the four-footed namesake of that illustrious rebel."

Both his moral and physical manliness are attested by

characteristic incidents. He had the courage at an anniversary dinner to turn his glass upside down and refuse to drink a coarse toast which was customary on the occasion; and he stood out against an equally customary practice at Eton, that of torturing pigs at the town fair on Ash Wednesday by cutting off their tails. When some of his

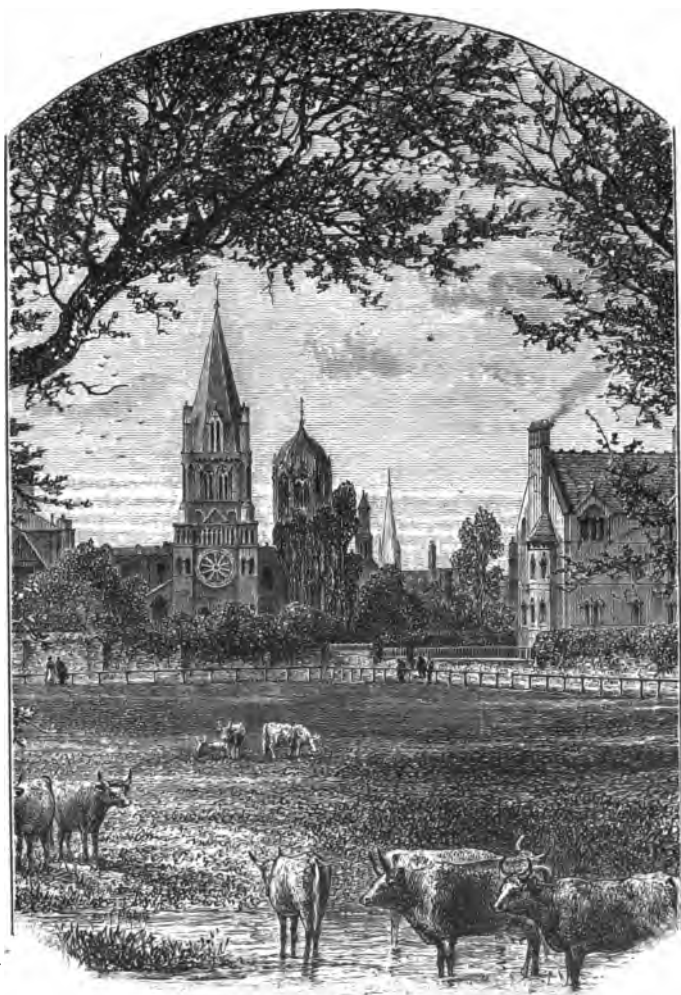


THE UNION ROOMS, OXFORD.

schoolfellows retaliated the following Ash Wednesday by hanging a bunch of newly-cut pigs' tails on his door, he sent them a challenge, offering to write his receipt "in good round hand upon their faces."

Of course he belonged to the Debating Society at Eton, and was an active member of it. His maiden speech was on the affirmative side of the question, "Is the education of the poor on the whole beneficial?" and it may be interesting to mention that the opening words of this the first formal speech he ever made were: "Sir, in this age of increased and increasing civilisation——"

He was chief among a group of boys who established



CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

the *Eton Miscellany*, of which publication during its existence he was the éditor. On many occasions—for his staff was often remiss—he had to compose the entire issue: leaders, paragraphs, humorous poems, satirical squibs, stories. Sir Francis Doyle, who was one of the staff, has left us in verse an entertaining picture of this redoubtable editor in his den clenching grimly “an eradicating pen”—

“Confronting frantic poets with calm eye,
And dooming hardened metaphors to die;
Who, if he found the young adherents fail,
The ode unfinished, uncommenced the tale,
With the next number bawling to be fed,
And its false feeders latitant or fled,
Sat down unflinchingly to write it all,
And kept the staggering project from a fall.”

From the force of character Gladstone displayed in managing his subordinates on this concern, and keeping the thing together, Doyle's father predicted an eminent future for him.

He left Eton in 1827, and went to read with private tutors. It was during this period that he paid a visit to a factory at Macclesfield, which he afterwards referred to in one of his speeches as giving him his “first ray of light on the subject of Free Trade.” He was shown some silk handkerchiefs, and the manufacturer complained of the competition to which Mr. Huskisson's removal of the prohibition on French handkerchiefs subjected him. “What I thought when they showed me these handkerchiefs,” said Mr. Gladstone, “was, How detestable they really are, and what in the world can be the object of the policy of coaxing, nursing, coddling up manufactures to produce goods such as those, which you ought to be ashamed of exhibiting?”

In Michaelmas Term, 1828, young Gladstone went up to Oxford, where he entered at Christ Church. Among his

contemporaries whose names were afterwards heard of were Bishop Charles Wordsworth, Archbishop Tait, Cardinal Manning, Sidney Herbert, Robert Lowe, Roundell Palmer (Lord Selborne), and Dean Liddell. Gladstone was a model undergraduate—studious and devout. Cardinal Manning remembered him “walking to church with his Bible and Prayer-book tucked under his arm.” He read with the same rigorous method which he afterwards applied, with such marvellous results in the way of work accomplished, to the labours of his public career. He founded an essay society known as the “W.E.G.”

In the famous debating society of Oxford, the Union, he so distinguished himself that he was elected its president. Here his maiden speech was delivered on February 11th, 1830. In it he supported the removal of Catholic and opposed the removal of Jewish disabilities, and argued that it was wiser to extinguish slavery by gradual process rather than summarily abolish it. His great performance at the Union, however, was his speech against the Reform Bill of 1831. This utterance seems to have made as profound an impression on those who heard it as did any of the great speeches of his subsequent career. Lord Lincoln wrote to his father, the Duke of Newcastle, that “a man had arisen in Israel.” Bishop Wordsworth says he felt no less sure than of his own existence that “Gladstone, our then Christ Church undergraduate, would one day rise to be Prime Minister of England.” Another who heard it wrote: “We all of us felt that an epoch in our lives had occurred.” This was indeed a notable sensation to have been produced by the oratory of an undergraduate. But there is one thing to be remarked about that speech which has sometimes been overlooked by Mr. Gladstone’s critics. It was on the Tory side, of course, and it was against a great measure of

reform ; but an acute judge who listened to it—Archdeacon Denison—thus described its effect upon him :—

“ I have just heard the best speech I ever heard in my life, by Gladstone, against the Reform Bill. But, mark my words, that man will one day be a Liberal, for he argued against the Bill on Liberal grounds.”*

That germ of Liberalism, however, must have been of purely spontaneous origin, for Mr. Gladstone himself attributed to his training at Oxford a strengthening rather than a weakening of his inherited Toryism. In a speech which he delivered nearly forty years later at Oxford, at the Palmerston Club, he spoke of “one great defect” which he traced in the Oxford education of his time.

“ Perhaps it was my own fault,” he said ; “ but I must admit that I did not learn when at Oxford that which I have learned since—namely, to set a due value upon the imperishable and inestimable principles of human liberty.”

It was in this Palmerston Club speech, by the way, that he gave his famous epigrammatic definition of the principles of the opposing parties—the principle of Conservatism as “jealousy of the people qualified by fear,” that of Liberalism as “trust in the people qualified by prudence.”

Gladstone read both for classical and mathematical honours—going in for the latter only to please his father—and in December, 1831, his diligence and dutifulness were rewarded by his carrying off a double first-class. This finished his university career. He was anxious to enter the Church, but his father disapproved, and he obeyed. Manning, his contemporary, who duly went into the Church, had a strong predilection for politics. It may be said of each of these two great Englishmen that he was equally fitted to become eminent in the career of his choice and in that of his destination.

* Related in Rev. T. Mozley's “*Reminiscences of Oriel and the Oxford Movement.*”

CHAPTER II.

MEMBER FOR NEWARK.

Newark Election—Scattering the Hecklers—First Vote on Irish Question—Maiden Speech—Enters Government—A Promising Under-Secretary—First Meeting with Lord Aberdeen.

MR. GLADSTONE was travelling in Italy—whither he had gone on a six-months' tour on leaving Oxford in the spring—when in the autumn of 1832 he was summoned to England to contest the borough of Newark.

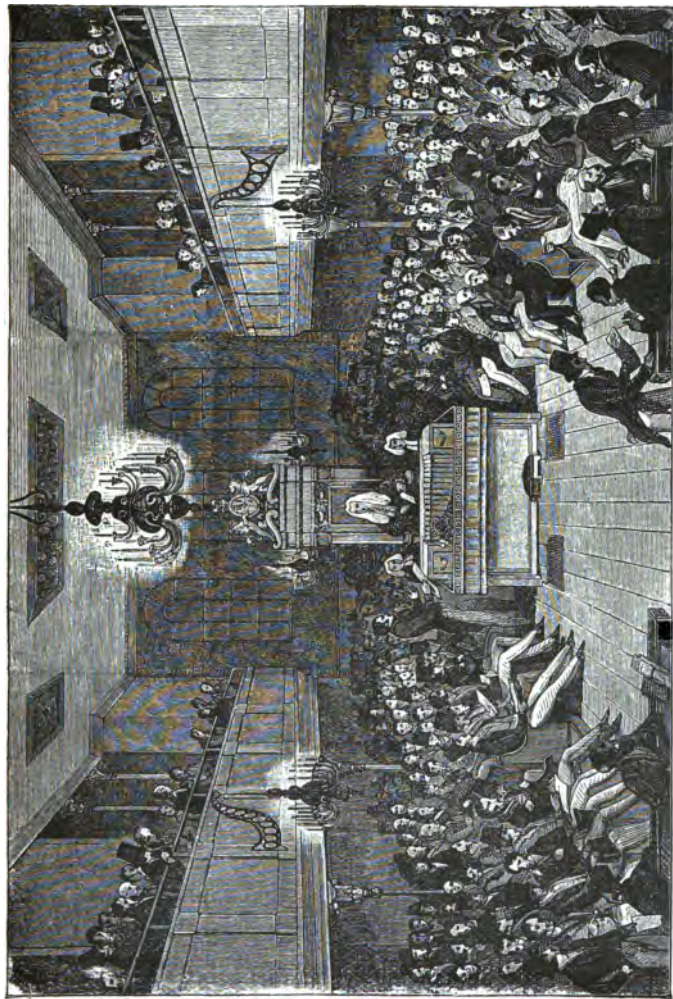
Parliament had been dissolved, and the general election which was about to take place was to be the first since the passage of the great Reform Bill. It was to be the opening of a new chapter in English history, the practical beginning of a great experiment which was expected by some to be the means of averting revolution and of opening a future of enlightened progress, and which others feared was going to prove the instrument of revolution itself, the machine of "red ruin, and the breaking up of laws." Men's minds were greatly disturbed at the time. Many religious people thought the end of the world was coming. The national credit was low; a virulent pestilence was raging; politics had been corrupt and cynical; and society still flagrantly bore the stamp which it had received from a profligate reign. The vengeance of God, said pious folk, was about to fall. On the other hand, there were optimist spirits who saw in all the symptoms of change and unrest the breaking of a great light, the dawn of a millennium. We may form some notion of the sentiments with which at such a moment such a young man as Mr. Gladstone then was—deeply imbued with religious feeling and with a sense of the moral responsibility of politics, conscious of genius, capable

of great enthusiasms, and endowed with extraordinary energy both of mind and body—received his call to enter public life.

The call came through the Duke of Newcastle, the “great” Duke who, when his action in evicting his tenants wholesale because they opposed him at an election was criticised, replied that he “could do what he liked with his own.” It was his son, Lord Lincoln, a fellow-undergraduate, who, on hearing Gladstone’s speech against the Reform Bills at the Oxford Union, had written home, as we have seen, that “a man had uprisen in Israel”; and when the Duke was casting around for a candidate to oppose the Whig lawyer who had defied his authority in Newark, Lord Lincoln recommended him to send for his brilliant college friend.

Mr. Gladstone’s address to the electors of Newark was a strictly Tory document, but in it was struck the keynote of his long political life. The duties of Governments, he said, “are strictly and purely religious, and Legislatures, like individuals, are bound to carry throughout their acts the spirit of the high truths they have acknowledged.” It is worth noting also that he advocated allotments for labourers, and, while regarding slavery as sanctioned by Scripture, was in favour of gradual emancipation.

The incident of this his first Parliamentary contest made, as was natural, a vivid impression on him. “My Newark recollections,” he wrote to an old constituent more than forty years later, “do not want much revival. I remember as it were yesterday my first arrival in the place at midnight by the Highflyer Coach, in August or September, 1832, after a journey of forty hours from Torquay, of which we thought nothing in those days. Next morning at eight we sallied forth from the Clinton Arms to begin a canvass, on which I now look back as the most exciting period of my life. I never worked harder or



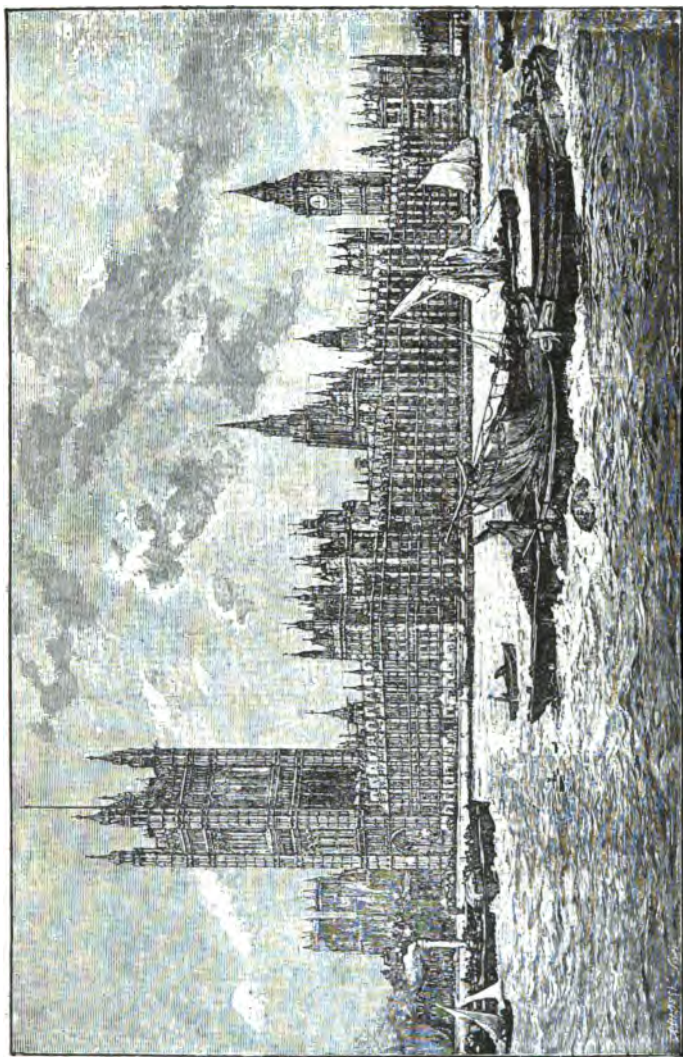
INTERIOR OF THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS, BURNT DOWN IN 1835.

slept so badly—that is to say, so little.” “We started on canvass at eight in the morning,” he writes to another correspondent, “his cousin, Prebendary Robertson, “and



THE BURNING OF THE OLD HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

worked at it for about nine hours, with a great crowd, band, and flags, and innumerable glasses of beer and wine all jumbled together; then a dinner of thirty or forty, with speeches and songs, until, say, ten o'clock; then we always



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.
(From a photograph by Frith & Co., Reigate.)

played a rubber of whist, and about twelve or one I got to bed, but not to sleep, for never in my life did I undergo any excitement to be compared with it. There was a public-house tour of speaking to the Red Clubs, with which I often had to top up after the dinner and before the whist." He was severely heckled on various topics, but his extraordinary subtlety in dialectics, intensified as it had been by his Oxford training, proved in his hands a weapon which spread as much confusion and bewilderment amongst his opponents as a quick-firing gun amongst an African tribe.

A sample of its operation will suffice. The candidate had just explained that, at the request of the Red Club, the Duke of Newcastle had recommended him as a fit and proper person to be a candidate, and that in consequence of that recommendation the Red Club had invited him to stand. "I was unknown to the Red Club," he had added, "as much as though I had been a person of New Zealand or Kamschatka." Thereupon the following dialogue ensued:—

A Radical Elector: "Are we to understand you, then, as the nominee of the Duke of Newcastle?"

Mr. Gladstone: "I will answer that question if you will tell me what you mean by *nominee*."

The Elector: "I consider the man as the nominee of the Duke when he is sent by his Grace to be crammed down the throats of the electors whether they will or not."

Mr. Gladstone: "Then, according to that definition, I am not the nominee of the Duke of Newcastle."

The Elector: "What is your definition of a nominee?"

Mr. Gladstone: "I am not here to give the definition. I ask what you mean by the word *nominee*, and according to your own explanation of it I give the answer."

With hecklers put to flight in this manner the career of the candidate was triumphant. He was returned at the

head of the poll, another Tory obtaining the second seat, and the Whig being completely routed.

On January 29th, 1833, in the first Reformed Parliament, the young member for Newark took his seat in the assembly with which his name was to become imperishably associated. The Whigs were in a strong majority, Lord Grey, in the House of Lords, being Prime Minister, and Lord Althorp leader of the House of Commons. Sir Robert Peel led the compact Tory minority in whose ranks Mr. Gladstone ranged himself, and O'Connell led an Irish party who were in practical opposition to the Government. The Parliamentary situation was thus somewhat analogous to that which existed after the famous general election of 1880, when Mr. Gladstone was leader of an immense Liberal majority. The analogy was noteworthy in other respects. In the Parliament of 1833, as in that of nearly half a century later, the Irish question soon became the most burning topic, and the Liberal Government then, as in 1880, found themselves resorting to the time-honoured specific which Mr. Gladstone was, at a still later period, to stigmatise as the "judicious mixture" of coercion and conciliation. The tithes, which the lavishly endowed Church of an exceedingly small minority was collecting mainly from a population of a different religion, then formed the most acute point of the Irish difficulty. Government introduced a severe Coercion Bill to suppress the disaffection, and introduced a small measure directed, not against tithe, but against a minor tax called Church Cess, in the hope of appeasing it. Mr. Gladstone voted for the Coercion Bill and criticised the measure of Church reform as going too far. Such was the first action in relation to the Irish question of the English statesman who was afterwards to inaugurate the policy of Home Rule and to disestablish the Irish Church.

Mr. Gladstone in his later years said of those early votes that he looked back upon several, though not all, with regret, and that there were none which he regretted more than those relating to Ireland.

His maiden speech, however, was not upon the Irish question. It was delivered on June 3rd, in his first session, in reply to some charges which Lord Howick had brought against the management of the slaves on his father's estate in Demerara. The young member refuted the charges, and declared himself in favour of the abolition of slavery provided the abolition were effected gradually. "I do not," he said, "view property as an abstract thing; it is the creature of civil society. By the Legislature it is granted, and by the Legislature it is destroyed." The speech was favourably received, but it did not make any particular impression on the House.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Gladstone's speeches at this early period showed most of the characteristics which afterwards distinguished his oratory—great fluency, long and involved but eloquent periods, wonderful precision of statement, and an impressive and vigorous delivery. His gestures were varied and animated, his voice was rich and musical, and the Lancastrian burr was on his tongue.

The Whig Government soon began to lose its hold on the House. Lord Grey resigned in 1834, and, after a brief spell of a reconstructed Ministry under Lord Melbourne, the Ministry was disarranged again by the death of Lord Spencer, which removed his eldest son, Lord Althorp, from the leadership of the House of Commons. When Lord Melbourne proposed to reconstruct the Ministry again the King refused to allow him. He dismissed all the Whig Ministers and sent for the Duke of Wellington and commanded him to form a Tory Government. This step has a



SIR ROBERT PEEL

peculiar historic interest ; it was the last occasion on which the royal prerogative was so exercised.

The Duke of Wellington thought it wiser that the task of forming a new administration should be entrusted to Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert was then travelling on the Continent, and a special messenger was despatched to bring him back. When he arrived—"the great man in a great position, summoned from Rome to govern England," to quote the phrase in "*Coningsby*"—he made Mr. Gladstone a member of his Government. "When a Prime Minister in difficulties, looking about for men to fill the minor offices of his administration," says Mr. George Russell, "sees among his supporters a clever and comely young man, eloquent in speech, ready in debate, with a safe seat, an ample fortune, a high reputation at the University, and a father who wields political influence in an important constituency, he sees a Junior Lord of the Treasury made ready to his hand."

Thus in his twenty-fifth year, and in his first Parliament, did Mr. Gladstone find himself started upon an official career.

This is a suitable place to remark upon one noteworthy circumstance in connexion with Mr. Gladstone's history. Rarely has a great man at the outset of his career had fewer difficulties to overcome, or been more splendidly helped by favouring circumstance. The son of a rich and influential father, every advantage that wealth, education, and position could give was his ; and from the first, even from his Eton days, it seems to have been accepted by those who surrounded him that he was one whom destiny had marked out for a great position. He was welcomed into public life, welcomed into office, and while he was still but a youthful Under-Secretary ecclesiastics were writing to him assuring him that the Premiership awaited him, and advising him to prepare himself with that goal in view. "There is

no height," wrote his friend Bishop Wilberforce, "to which you may not fairly rise. If it pleases God to spare us violent convulsions and the loss of our liberties, you may at a future day wield the whole government of this land. . . . Act *now* with a view to *then*." The early lives of some great men afford us the example of a character strengthened by long struggles against obstacles and discouragements; the example of Mr. Gladstone's youth is the rarer one of a character not weakened by the profusion of good fortune, but availing itself strenuously and to the utmost of every opportunity placed in its way.

Parliament was dissolved immediately on the formation of the new Ministry. The old House of Commons was burnt down during the recess, and it is worth remarking that Mr. Gladstone, in the last Parliament to which he belonged, was the only member but one (Mr. Villiers) whose career linked the Chamber now existing with the historic House which witnessed the struggles of the Revolutionary era, and echoed with the eloquence of Burke and Sheridan and Pitt and Fox.

Mr. Gladstone was returned at the General Election unopposed, and, though the elections resulted in a considerable majority for the Liberals, Sir Robert Peel's Government continued in office—such being a course which was possible in those days. On the meeting of Parliament Mr. Gladstone was promoted to the Under-Secretaryship of the Colonies.

Lord Aberdeen, who was afterwards to become one of his dearest friends, was his official chief, and Mr. Gladstone has himself left us a most interesting account of the first meeting which, on that occasion, took place between them. It was an evening in January when he called at the Colonial Office. He went, he says, "in fear and

trembling. I knew Lord Aberdeen only by public rumour. I had heard of his high character, but I had also heard of him as a man of cold manners and close and even haughty reserve. It was dusk when I entered the room—the one



LORD ABERDEEN.

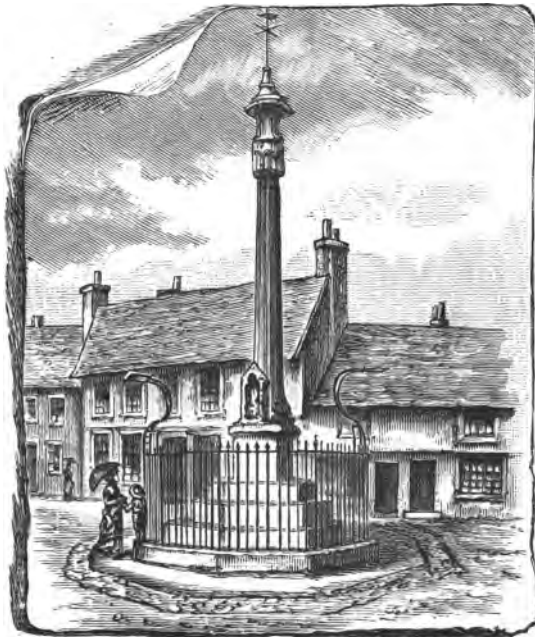
on the first floor with the bow-window looking on to the Park—so that I saw his figure rather than his countenance. I do not recollect the matter of the conversation, but I well remember that before I had been three minutes with him all my apprehensions had melted away like

snow in the sun; and I came away from that interview conscious, indeed—as who could fail to be conscious?—of his dignity, but of a dignity so tempered by a peculiar purity and gentleness, and so associated with impressions of his kindness, and even friendship, that I believe I felt more about the wonder of his being at that time so misunderstood by the outer world than about the new duties and responsibilities of my new office.”*

* Letter to Sir Arthur Gordon, quoted in “The Earl of Aberdeen,” by Sir Arthur Gordon, G.C.M.G.

Such was the beginning of a connection between two statesmen whose careers were to be linked together thenceforward by ties of peculiar closeness.

Mr. Gladstone threw himself with ardour into his official work, but his spell of service this time was destined to be but a short one. Within little more than a month from the meeting of Parliament, on April 8th, 1835, Sir Robert Peel resigned, the Government having been defeated by a majority of thirty-three on a motion of Lord John Russell's relating to the Irish Church. The member for Newark thus once more became a private member serving in Opposition.



THE OLD CROSS, NEWARK.

CHAPTER III.

MARRIAGE.

Work as a Private Member—O'Connell—First Book, "State in its Relations with the Church"—Marriage—Mr. Gladstone's Residences—In Office again—Ambition to become Irish Secretary—Enters Cabinet as President of Board of Trade—Resigns Office over Maynooth Grant—A Projected Walking Tour.

As a private member, however, Mr. Gladstone was by no means idle. He lived the life of a promising young politician who has already made his mark. At this time he had rooms in the Albany, and he went out a good deal in society; he spoke often in the House, served on Committees, and entered with zest into all the duties of an earnest member of Parliament. He mentions going on one occasion on a Sub-Committee, with O'Connell and Sir George Sinclair, to take the evidence of an important witness who was disabled by age from travelling to Westminster. They drove some fifty miles into the country, and he was fourteen hours in an open carriage in the Irish Liberator's company, which he seems to have enjoyed. He took an active part in the discussions on the question of giving Canada responsible government, which at that time occupied a good deal of the attention of Parliament.* In August he used to go to Scotland in search of grouse.

But the chief event of this period of his career was the writing of his first book, "The State in its Relations with

* Many years afterwards (in House of Commons, May 10th, 1886) he referred to these debates when drawing an analogy between the case of Canada and that of Ireland in the matter of Home Rule, and quoted O'Connell's reference to Papineau, the French orator and statesman, who had been the promoter and leader of the agitation in Canada: "The case is exactly the case of Ireland, with this difference—that in Canada the agitator has got the 'o' at the end of his name instead of at the beginning."

the Church." This was the book in reviewing which in the *Edinburgh Review* Macaulay described the author, in a phrase which was afterwards much quoted, as "the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories." It was published in the autumn of 1838. It was a strong defence of the principle of an Established Church, and it caused Mr. Gladstone to be looked on by Churchmen as their staunchest and most able champion. Nevertheless, it was so deeply tinged with the spirit of the Catholic revival then in full force at Oxford, that Newman—not yet gone over to Rome—came to look upon its author as one of his disciples.*

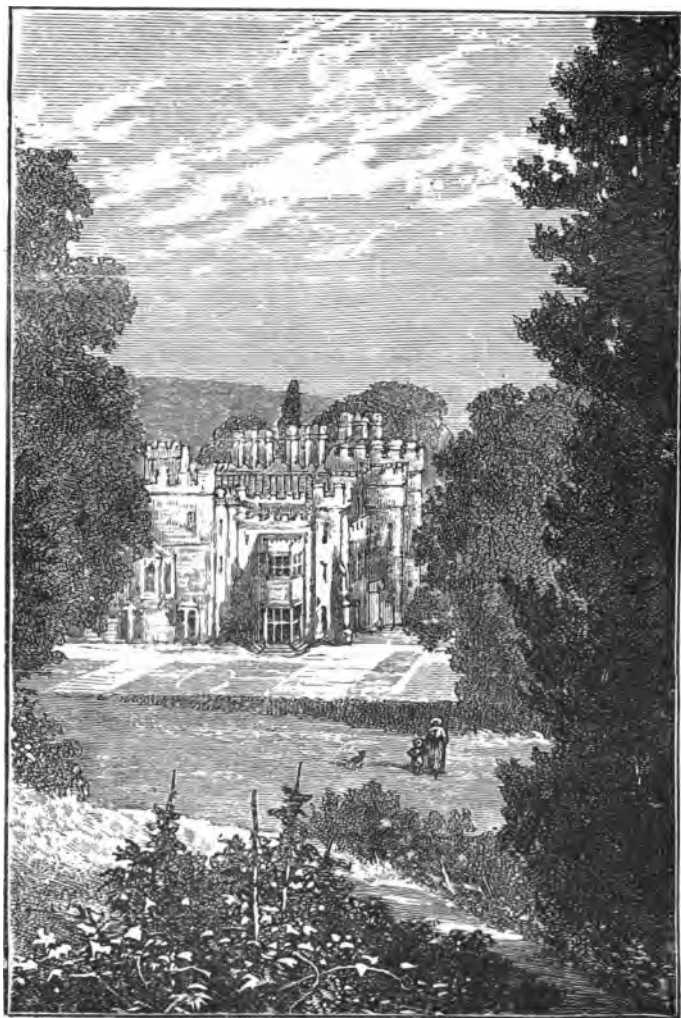
He had worked so hard at this book and at other labours and studies that his eyesight became impaired, and he was ordered by his doctors to give up reading for a time and go abroad. He spent the winter of 1838-9 in Rome. There he met his reviewer, Macaulay, and his great friend Manning, afterwards Cardinal, with whom he went to see Cardinal Wiseman at the English College.

Meetings, however, of far greater consequence to Mr. Gladstone's future likewise took place during this visit. The widow and daughters of Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, of Hawarden Castle, Flintshire, were spending the same winter in Rome. Lady Glynne was a daughter of the Lord Braybrooke of that day, and the Miss Glynnes were two beautiful girls. The Queen in later days, when writing to a member of the family, mentioned that when she was a girl she remembered hearing people about her talking of the "two beautiful Miss Glynnes." Mr. Gladstone saw a great deal of his countrywomen during their stay in the

* Mr. Gladstone relates that shortly after the appearance of this book O'Connell came up to him in the House of Commons, behind the Speaker's chair, and said, "I claim the half of you." "It was very kind on his part," he adds, "to enter thus freely into conversation with a young man opposed to him in politics and hotly prejudiced against him."

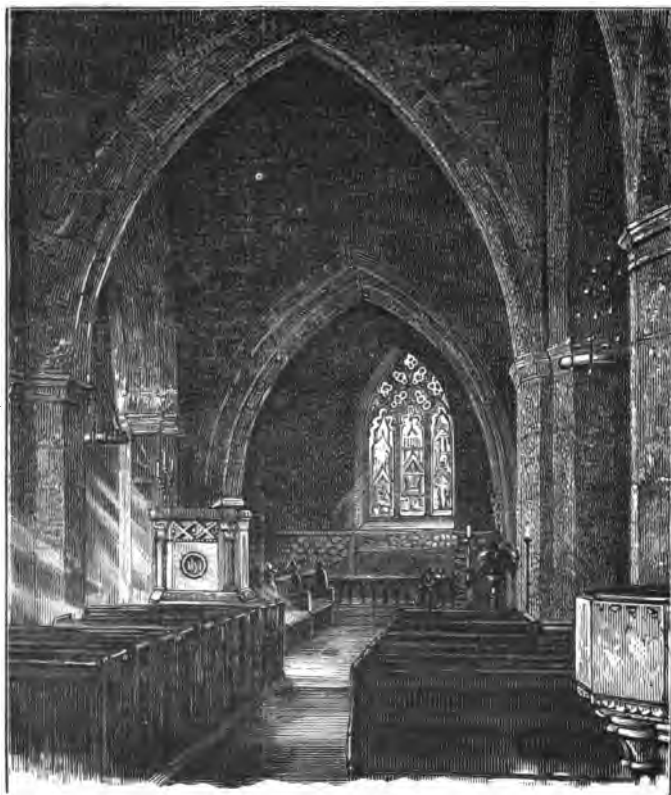
Eternal City, and in that hallowed and romantic atmosphere an attachment ripened between him and the elder of the girls, Miss Catherine Glynne, and they became engaged. On the 25th of the following July they were married at Hawarden Castle, where a double wedding took place—the younger sister, Miss Mary Glynne, being married at the same time to the fourth Lord Lyttelton.

Mrs. Gladstone was the heiress of Hawarden, her brother, Sir Stephen Glynne, the ninth and last baronet of the line, being childless. The young couple were welcomed by Sir Stephen to share with him the Castle as a residence, which they did until, at his death, it passed into their sole possession. Thus for several years Mr. Gladstone, although dwelling there, did not sit at the head of the table in the residence which has become so inseparably connected with his name. Here it may be convenient to mention the houses which Mr. Gladstone chiefly occupied during his lifetime from the period of his marriage. At first he and his wife, when in town, lived for a time with Mrs. Gladstone's mother at 13, Carlton House Terrace; then Sir John Gladstone made over to them 6, Carlton Gardens; and when Mr. Gladstone was in office, of course they occupied the official residence in Downing Street. Mr. Gladstone's best known London house, Downing Street apart, was 11, Carlton House Terrace, which he purchased in 1856, and lived in for twenty years. A shrinkage of his income necessitated his parting with this mansion and effecting other economies—amongst them the sale of his collection of old china—and for four years he occupied a less expensive residence at 73, Harley Street. In later years it was his custom when not in office either to rent a house for the session of Parliament, or to stay with one of the many friends possessing fine town houses, who



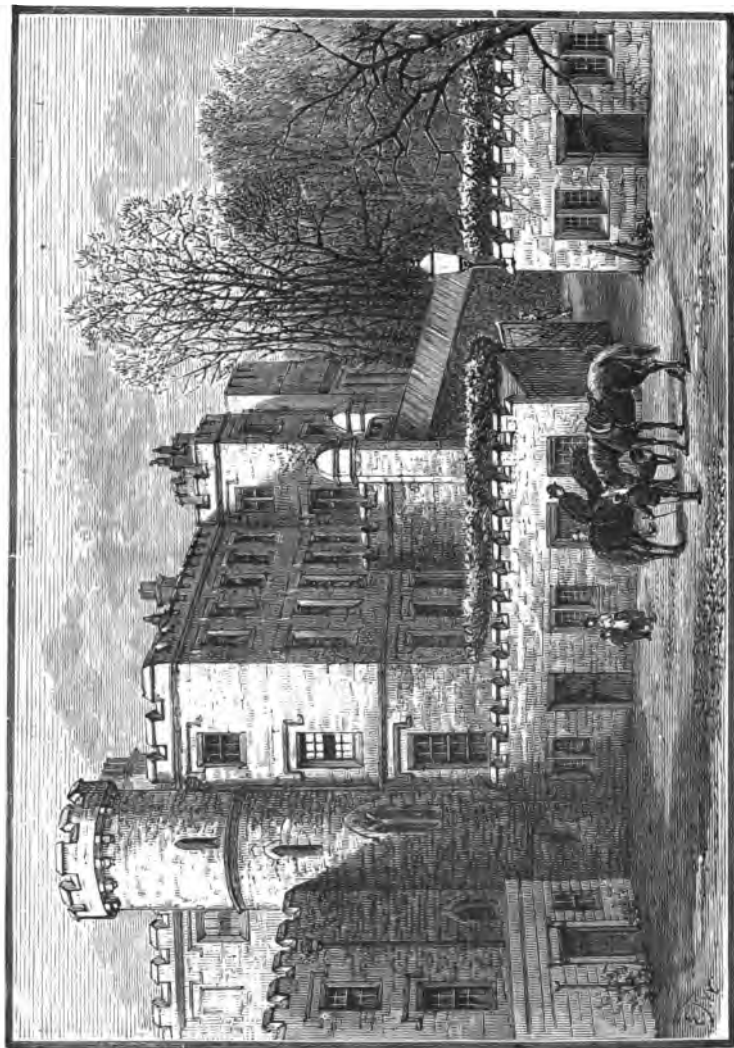
HAWARDEN CASTLE.

were only too happy to place them at his disposal. His principal host on such occasions used either to be Mr. Armitage or Mr. Stuart Rendel, afterwards Lord Rendel of



INTERIOR OF HAWARDEN CHURCH.

Hatchlands, whose son married a daughter of Mr. Gladstone's. Before his father's death, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone often spent a good deal of their time during the

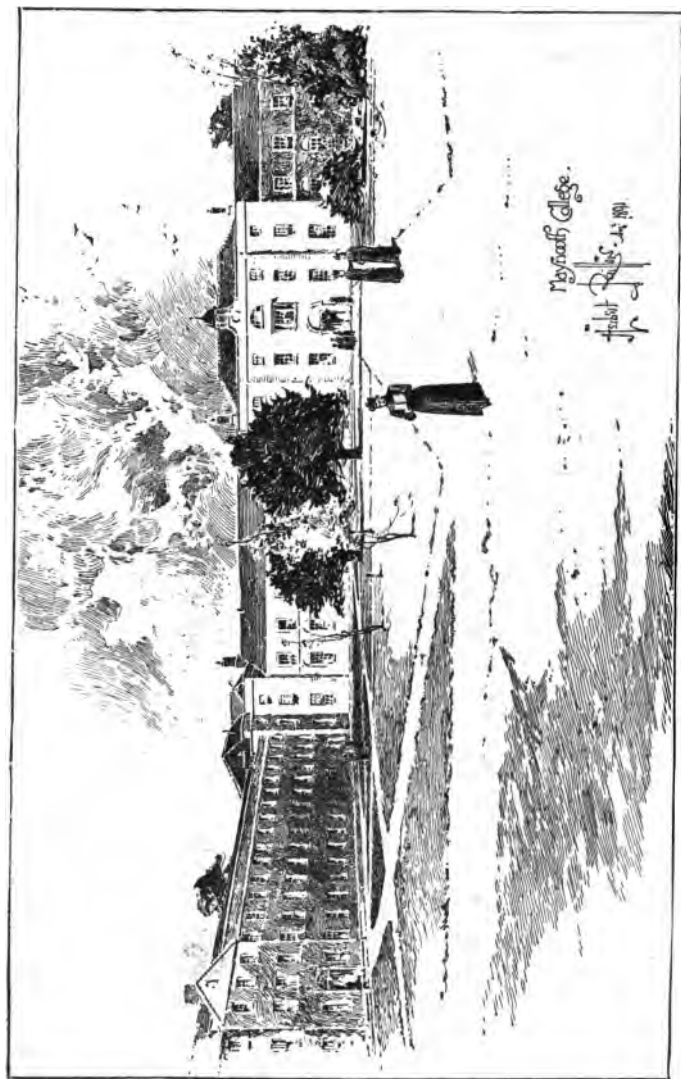


COURTYARD AND OUT-HOUSES, HAWARDEN CASTLE.

recess at Fasque, Sir John Gladstone's country seat in Kincardineshire ; but Hawarden, whose woods—when Mr. Gladstone had decided on the form of exercise which gave him the maximum of wholesome exertion in the open air in the minimum of time—rang with the strokes of the famous axe, and in whose rectory church he read the lessons every Sunday, was from the beginning the chief retreat in which the great statesman sought repose and refreshment in the intervals of his public labours.

In 1840 Mr. Gladstone wrote another book, "Church Principles considered in their Results" ; and the same year he made his first notable speech on foreign policy. It was in reply to a speech of Macaulay's in a debate on British relations with China, and it is worthy of remark that in it he struck the keynote—anxiety that the arms of England should never be employed in unrighteous enterprises—which characterised almost all his utterances in connection with foreign affairs throughout his career.

We get an interesting glimpse of him as he looked at this period from one who was a boy at Eton when Mr. Gladstone and his brother-in-law, Lord Lyttelton, went down in the midsummer of 1840 to examine the candidates for the Newcastle scholarship. "I wish you to understand," writes this gentleman, "that Mr. Gladstone appeared not to me only, but to others, as a gentleman wholly unlike other examiners or school people. It was not as a *politician* that we admired him, but as a refined Churchman, deep also in political philosophy. . . . When he spoke to us in 'Pop' as an honorary member, we were charmed and affected emotionally ; his voice was low and sweet, his manner was that of an elder cousin. He seemed to treat us with unaffected respect, and to be treated with respect by a man is the greatest delight for a boy. . . . He



MAYNOOTH COLLEGE. (*From a photograph by Lawrence, Dublin.*)

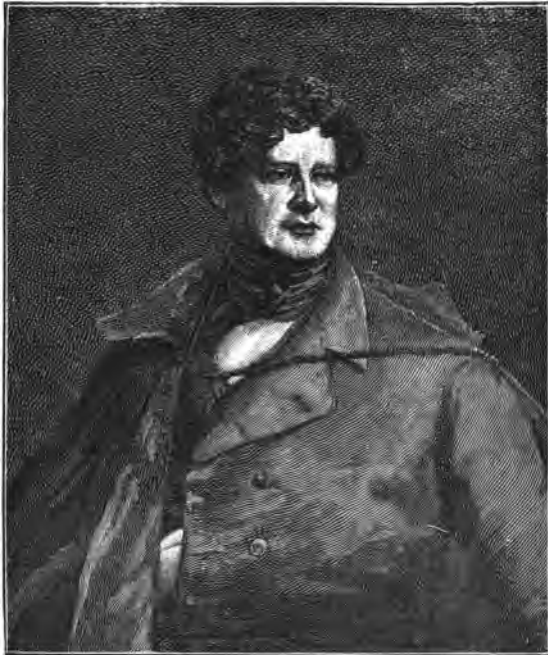
seemed to me then an apostle of unworldly ardour bridling his life.”* It is curious to compare with this another impression recorded on or about the same period. Lord Malmesbury mentions in his diary meeting Gladstone and being disappointed in his appearance, “which is that of a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic”; “but,” he adds, “he is very agreeable.”

In 1841 Mr. Gladstone received his next call to office. The Whig Government had been defeated on a motion relating to the Corn Laws. Lord John Russell wanted to meet a deficit of two millions in the Budget by a duty on wheat of eight shillings per quarter. Sir Robert Peel advocated a sliding scale instead of the fixed duty, and on this question the country was appealed to. The result was the defeat of the Whigs and the return of Sir Robert Peel with a Tory majority of eighty. Mr. Gladstone was given in the new administration the post of Vice-President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint. Even at this period his interest in Ireland was so great that he had been earnestly hoping to be sent to Dublin Castle as Chief Secretary. Mrs. Gladstone once said to the present writer at Hawarden—it was after his defeat on his Home Rule policy in 1886: “They say Mr. Gladstone’s feeling for Ireland is only a thing of yesterday. How little they know! I remember well the day he received his first ministerial appointment under Sir Robert Peel. It was the same day my niece, Lady Frederick Cavendish, was born. Mr. Gladstone came home and threw himself upon a chair, looking quite depressed. ‘What did they give you?’ I asked. ‘The Board of Trade,’ he said, ‘and I wanted the Irish office.’ They thought he would be a good man for the Board of Trade, I suppose, because he was a

* Quoted by Mr. Russell.

merchant's son. But from the very outset of his career he had an intense ambition to take hold of the Irish question."

The Board of Trade, however, called out Mr.



DANIEL O'CONNELL.

(From the picture by Sir David Wilkie.)

Gladstone's financial talents, and enabled him, in helping to devise the revised tariff, and in defending it, to make a great impression upon his colleagues of the Government and upon the House. It was, so to speak, the first blush of that reputation he was afterwards to acquire as the greatest financial Minister of the century.

In 1843 Mr. Gladstone, at the age of thirty-three, was taken into the Cabinet itself. He became President of the Board of Trade on Lord Ripon leaving that department for the Board of Control.

The following year, however, he took a very remarkable step. He resigned his position in the Government, to the great annoyance of his party, on account of what many deemed an eccentric scruple. Sir Robert Peel, in response to pressure from the Irish members, proposed to increase the grant which Government was in the habit of making to Maynooth College, an establishment for the education of the Roman Catholic priesthood. Mr. Gladstone thought that this grant was at variance with the views he had expressed in his book on the relations of Church and State, and though he was willing to support, and did support, the grant as a private member, he did not care to do so and remain a member of the Government, lest he should be open to the imputation of changing his views from considerations of self-interest.

The step cost him a severe wrench. "It is not profane," he said, "if I now say, '*with a great price obtained I this freedom.*' The political association in which I stood was to me at the time the *alpha* and *omega* of public life. The Government of Sir Robert Peel was believed to be of immovable strength. My place, as President of the Board of Trade, was at the very kernel of its most interesting operations; for it was in progress, from year to year, with continually waxing courage, towards the emancipation of industry, and therein towards the accomplishment of another great and blessed work of public justice. Giving up what I highly prized . . . I felt myself open to the charge of being opinionated and wanting in deference to really great authorities; and I could not but know that I

should inevitably be regarded as fastidious and fanciful, fitter for a dreamer, or possibly a schoolman, than for the active purposes of public life in a busy and moving age."

The commonplace politicians indeed voted that his action was "ludicrous," but posterity, knowing him better, will judge it an extreme example of a sensitive and characteristic conscientiousness.

During his retirement he projected a walking tour in Ireland with his friend Mr. J. R. Hope-Scott, "eschewing all grandeur, and taking little account even of scenery, compared with the purpose of looking from close quarters at the institutions for religion and education of the country, and at the character of the people." Ireland, he thought, was "likely to find this country and Parliament so much employment for years to come" that he felt "rather oppressively" an obligation to try to see it with his own eyes. It would have been an interesting tour, for it was the year before the Famine, and the Young Ireland movement was in full vigour. But the project fell through. Its conception was another instance of Mr. Gladstone's early sense of the importance of the Irish question.

Instead of going to Ireland he went to the Continent, and there he paid his first visit to Dr. Döllinger. Later in the same year (1845), while shooting, his gun accidentally exploded and blew off the first finger of his left hand.

Mr. Gladstone's spell of retirement from office was soon to end; for the era of Free Trade had begun, and his services in carrying out that reform became indispensable.

CHAPTER IV.

MEMBER FOR OXFORD UNIVERSITY.

The Irish Famine—Free Trade—Cobden and Bright—Mr. Gladstone's Return for Oxford—Personal Sorrows—Deliverance on Foreign Policy—Letters on the Neapolitan Prisons—Lord Palmerston's Dismissal and his Revenge.

ONE of the most curious and suggestive facts which have to be noted in the political history of England since the Act



RICHARD COBDEN.

(From a photograph by W. & D. Downey,
Ebury Street.)

of Union is the part which Irish questions have played in influencing the fate not merely of Imperial Ministries, but of British reforms. Several Governments since the beginning of the century had been thrown out or maintained in power in accordance with their action upon an Irish Coercion Bill or an Irish Tithe Bill, and, until the last decade of the century, in almost

every Parliament the phenomenon has been repeated. It was the question of Ireland which determined that Government and Parliament should at last take up the peculiarly, the historically British policy of Free Trade.

For ten years the Anti-Corn Law League had been labouring assiduously to promote this great cause. Its orators—Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright outside Parliament, and Mr. Charles Villiers within — had been expending a noble eloquence in the endeavour to educate the country in its ideas. At length their efforts began to slacken, and the cause seemed to languish under the influence of a few good harvests, when suddenly the attention of the three kingdoms was riveted



JOHN BRIGHT.

(From a photograph by Russell & Sons,
Tutnell Park.)

upon Ireland. The potato crop was blighted in 1845, and a famine of the most appalling dimensions became imminent. The Cabinet met four times in one week. Noble lords and dukes, agricultural societies, and wisacres of all kinds, raised a distracting chorus of suggestions for averting or mitigating the calamity, amongst them such suggestions as that the starving Irish would find great nutriment in thrice-boiled bones. "Why don't they eat cakes?" said the French Princess during the Revolution when told that the mob were clamouring for bread. This *jeu d'esprit* was capped by the premier duke of England—though he meant his proposition seriously—when confronted with the Irish

famine. "Let the Irish peasants," he said, "eat curry-powder." Sir Robert Peel, in this emergency, boldly proposed to his Cabinet to remove all restrictions upon the importation of food.

His Cabinet, however, would not support him, and would only agree to relief works. This was in the autumn. In November Lord John Russell, in a public letter, declared himself a convert to Free Trade. Again Sir Robert Peel endeavoured to force the policy on his Cabinet, and at last, failing to do so, he resigned. Lord John Russell declining to form a Government, Sir Robert was recalled, and proceeded to reconstruct his Cabinet on the lines of a policy for repealing the Corn Laws. In the new Cabinet Mr. Gladstone, as being the strongest Free Trader in the Tory ranks, was given a place—that of Secretary of State for the Colonies. He thus became Sir Robert Peel's right-hand man in carrying out the great commercial policy with which that statesman's name is linked not less conspicuously than that of Cobden.

Cobden's idea Mr. Gladstone had adopted wholly. For Cobden the man he conceived an admiration which eventually grew to surpass that which he felt for almost any other figure in English politics. "I do not know," he said many years after this time, "that there is in any period a man whose public career and life were nobler or more admirable. Of course I except Washington. Washington, to my mind, is the purest figure in history."* Besides Cobden, Mr. Gladstone, in taking his part in repealing the Corn Laws, was brought into connection with two men who were afterwards to remain long associated with his career—

* "I owe to Washington," said Mr. Gladstone, on another occasion (in a letter to *The Times*, April 24th, 1889), "no trivial part of my public education."



LORD PALMERSTON.
(From a photograph by Fradelle & Young.)

Mr. John Bright, subsequently his colleague in Liberal Governments, and Mr. Charles Villiers. Both of these gentlemen seceded from him over his Home Rule policy of 1886; and it is an interesting and pathetic circumstance that, in Mr. Gladstone's last Parliament, his "pair"—the opponent with whom he agreed upon a mutual neutralisation of votes—was Mr. Villiers, his old companion-in-arms of those days.

The fact is notable, however, that, though in the Ministry and, perhaps, next to the Premier, the most important member of it, Mr. Gladstone was not in Parliament while the Corn Laws were being repealed. The Duke of Newcastle was an implacable Protectionist, and he announced his intention of opposing him should he seek re-election for Newark after accepting office in the Free Trade Government. Mr. Gladstone accordingly did not contest the borough, and remained without a seat until the general election of 1847, when he was returned for Oxford University.

His return for Oxford opened a new chapter in Mr. Gladstone's life. He had long coveted this seat, which in those days was regarded with peculiar honour; and Oxford in turn had been looking to him for some time as the best champion the cause in which she was most interested could have. The Bishop of Salisbury declared him "the deepest, truest, most attached, most effective advocate for the Church and Universities in coming and probably very serious dangers." Accordingly, when the election came (in July, 1847), Oxford returned him by a substantial majority—though not at the head of the poll, that position being occupied by a colleague of more uncompromising Tory principles. Mr. Coleridge, who was afterwards Chief Justice, was secretary of his committee, and

Mrs. Gladstone, it is said, helped as canvasser on the occasion.

Sir Robert Peel's Government had been beaten in the House of Commons on the second reading of a Coercion Bill for Ireland on the very day the Corn Bill, which an Irish famine had precipitated, passed its third reading in the House of Lords. Lord John Russell had thereupon formed a Whig administration, and it was this administration which was returned to power at the General Election.

Mr. Gladstone accordingly found himself in Opposition during his first years as member for Oxford. Mr. Russell well remarks that an examination of his votes during these years would show that he was passing through a period of transition. He still clung to his early traditions, but his commercial ideas had become pronouncedly Liberal, and even upon Church questions he was beginning to manifest Liberationist tendencies.

In 1850 he lost a little daughter, a sorrow which affected him deeply. In the same year he lost, in another sense, the two friends with whom he was most intimately associated on the subject—that of religion—which of all others lay nearest to his heart. Mr. J. R. Hope-Scott and Archdeacon Henry Manning, afterwards Cardinal, joined the Church of Rome. It was a terrible blow to Mr. Gladstone ; they had been his two dearest friends—they were the godfathers of his eldest son—and this secession, though it left their mutual regard unimpaired, opened an unbridgeable gulf between them. How deeply Mr. Gladstone's feelings were stirred may be gathered from a letter which he wrote to Mr. Hope-Scott at the time, from which we quote the following extract. It is interesting as an illustration of the intensely spiritual as well as of the warmly affectionate side of Mr. Gladstone's temperament.

"Separated we are," he wrote, "but I hope and think not yet estranged. Were I more estranged I should bear the separation better. If estrangement is to come I know not, but it will only be, I think, from causes the operation of which is still in its infancy—causes not affecting me. Why should I be estranged from you? I honour you even in what I think your error; why, then, should my feelings to you alter in anything else? It seems to me as though, in these fearful times, events were more and more growing too large for our puny grasp, and that we should the more look for and trust the Divine purpose in them when we find they have wholly passed beyond the reach and measure of our own. 'The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.' The very afflictions of the present are a sign of joy to follow. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, is still our prayer in common: the same prayer, in the same sense; and a prayer which absorbs every other. That is for the future: for the present we have to endure, to trust, and to pray that each day may bring its strength with its burden, and its lamp for its gloom.

"Ever yours with unaltered affection,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

Many years afterwards (in 1873), when asked by Hope-Scott's daughter, Mrs. Maxwell Scott, of Abbotsford, to send her some recollections of her father, he wrote a long and interesting account, which closed with these characteristic words: "If I have traversed some of the ground in sadness, I now turn to the present thought of his light and peace and progress, and may they be his more and more abundantly in that world where the shadows that our sins and follies cast no longer darken the aspect and glory of the truth; and may God ever bless you, the daughter of my friend!"

In this same year—1850—Mr. Gladstone made his first great deliverance on foreign policy. The utterance is memorable for many reasons. As some of his earliest speeches, as we have seen, contained the germ of that religious theory of politics which distinguished his action throughout his career, so this speech was a rather full

expression of the principles which ever dominated his judgment in relation to England's part in international affairs.

Lord Palmerston was Foreign Secretary in Lord John Russell's Government, and Lord Palmerston, though a Whig, might be said to have been the prototype of the modern Jingo. A "spirited foreign policy" was his constant and peculiar ambition. In 1850 a rare opportunity offered itself to his hand. Some three years previously a Maltese Jew named Don Pacifico, who was a British subject living at Athens, had had his house wrecked and looted by an Athenian mob. His claim for compensation, which included damage done to a certain gorgeous bedstead, was being shirked by the Greek Government. Certain other claims like Don Pacifico's, and one or two incidents of a vexatious character, cropping up about the same time, and giving Lord Palmerston further cause of umbrage against Greece, he eventually sent an ultimatum to the Greek Government, calling for payment of the claims within a specified time. As Greece hesitated he despatched the British fleet to the Piræus, with orders to seize all Greek ships in the waters. France and Russia, taking the part of Greece, protested against this step, and for the moment it looked as if the peace of Europe was about to be ruptured. The Opposition thought it time to express some censure upon these proceedings, and Lord Stanley in the Lords, and Mr. Roebuck* in the Commons, were put up to move resolutions to that effect. In replying to Mr. Roebuck, Lord Palmerston made a very famous and most effective speech, which occupied five hours in delivery. In it occurred the well-known passage which declared that the meanest and poorest British subject should be able to feel,

* Mr. Roebuck, though an Independent Liberal, was supported by the full strength of the Opposition on this occasion.

wherever he was, as the Roman of old, who was entitled to say, "*Civis Romanus sum*"—that the might of a great empire was at his back, and ready to protect and defend him when his rights were infringed. Here are some passages from Mr. Gladstone's reply, which is memorable in another respect as having been one of the most eloquent speeches he ever delivered :—

Sir, great as is the influence and power of Britain, she cannot afford to follow, for any length of time, a self-isolating policy. It would be a contravention of the law of nature and of God if it were possible for any single nation of Christendom to emancipate itself from the obligations which bind all other nations, and to arrogate, in the face of mankind, a position of peculiar privilege. And now I will grapple with the noble lord on the ground which he selected for himself, in the most triumphant portion of his speech, by his reference to those emphatic words, *Civis Romanus sum*. He vaunted, amidst the cheers of his supporters, that under his Administration an Englishman should be, throughout the world, what the citizen of Rome had been. What then, sir, was a Roman citizen? He was the member of a privileged caste; he belonged to a conquering race, to a nation that held all others bound down by the strong arm of power. For him there was to be an exceptional system of law; for him principles were to be asserted, and by him rights were to be enjoyed, that were denied to the rest of the world. Is such, then, the view of the noble lord as to the relation which is to subsist between England and other countries? Does he make the claim for us that we are to be uplifted upon a platform high above the standing-ground of all other nations? It is, indeed, too clear, not only from the expressions but from the whole tone of the speech of the noble viscount, that too much of this notion is lurking in his mind; that he adopts, in part, that vain conception that we, forsooth, have a mission to be the censors of vice and folly, of abuse and imperfection, among the other countries of the world; that we are to be the universal schoolmasters; and that all those who hesitate to recognise our office can be governed only by prejudice or personal animosity, and should have the blind war of diplomacy forthwith declared against them.

* * * * *

Sir, I say the policy of the noble lord tends to encourage and confirm in us that which is our besetting fault and weakness, both as a

nation and as individuals. Let an Englishman travel where he will as a private person, he is found in general to be upright, high-minded, brave, liberal, and true ; but, with all this, foreigners are too often sensible of something that galls them in his presence, and I apprehend it is because he has too great a tendency to self-esteem—too little disposition to regard the feelings, the habits, and the ideas of others. Sir, I find this characteristic too plainly legible in the policy of the noble lord. I doubt not that use will be made of our present debate to work upon this peculiar weakness of the English mind. The people will be told that those who oppose the motion are governed by personal motives, have no regard for public principles, no enlarged ideas of national policy. You will take your case before a favourable jury, and you think to gain your verdict ; but, sir, let the House of Commons be warned—let it warn itself—against all illusions. There is in this case also a course of appeal. There is an appeal, such as the honourable and learned member for Sheffield has made, from the one House of Parliament to the other. There is a further appeal from this House of Parliament to the people of England ; but, lastly, there is also an appeal from the people of England to the general sentiment of the civilised world ; and I, for my part, am of opinion that England will stand shorn of a chief part of her glory and pride if she shall be found to have separated herself, through the policy she pursues abroad, from the moral support which the general and fixed convictions of mankind afford—if the day shall come when she may continue to excite the wonder and the fear of other nations, but in which she shall have no part in their affection and regard.

Notwithstanding this speech, Lord Palmerston was supported by a majority of forty-six when Mr. Roebuck's resolution went to a division.

The following autumn Mr. Gladstone went to Naples for a visit of a few months. It was a purely private visit—undertaken on account of the health of one of his children, who had been ordered to winter in a warm climate—but it led to consequences which were heard around the world. During his stay Mr. Gladstone became a witness of the tyranny which was practised by the Neapolitan Government upon its political opponents. He visited the gaols in which the

political prisoners were confined, and was horrified at the barbarities which he there saw with his own eyes. He examined the whole administration with the judgment of one accustomed to the constitutional freedom of Englishmen, and he endorsed the description which the Neapolitan patriots had locally given it, as "the negation of God erected into a system of government." The upshot was that he addressed to Lord Aberdeen a series of public letters detailing what he saw, and expressing with his tremendous rhetoric the indignation which it aroused in him. These letters, coming from an English statesman of Cabinet rank, and expressed with such astonishing force, made a profound impression not only in England but throughout Europe. Lord Palmerston practically adopted them on behalf of the Government, and caused copies to be sent to Her Majesty's representatives at the various European Courts. The press everywhere took the question up, and the cause of Italian freedom was felt to have received an impulse and a support which no other means could have given it. This fact was the earliest cause of the veneration in which the name of Gladstone came to be held throughout the nation which was afterwards, thanks largely to his aid, to become a free and united Italy.

On his return from Naples Mr. Gladstone took a prominent part in opposing the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—a measure forbidding the Pope to name Roman Catholic bishops in these kingdoms according to their dioceses—a measure which could not possibly be made operative, but which Lord John Russell's Government, in a fit of "No Popery" panic, thought right to have passed into law.

The Government about this time began to get into low water. It already had undergone one process of

CHAPTER V.

HIS FIRST BUDGET.

Derby-Disraeli Government—First Encounter between Gladstone and Disraeli—The Aberdeen Coalition Government—Gladstone Chancellor of the Exchequer—His First Budget—The Crimean War—Resignation—In Opposition—The Orsini Debate—Gladstone's Dislike of Palmerston—Second Derby-Disraeli Administration—Commissioner to the Ionian Islands—Homeric Studies.

SIR ROBERT PEEL was killed by a fall from his horse the evening after the Don Pacifico debate. This left the group of Conservative Free Traders in the House of Commons—who were known as Peelites—without a leader, and their growth as a guiding portion of the Tory party was accordingly checked. The bulk of the Tories, with a strong leaning towards Protection, fell under the leadership of Mr. Disraeli. In the Government which was formed by Lord Derby, Mr. Disraeli became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, his chief being in the Lords, became also leader of the House of Commons. This was the first establishment in a position of pre-eminence of that singular politician who was to be Mr. Gladstone's chief rival through so much of his subsequent career. Mr. Gladstone himself, being a Peelite, did not take office in this administration.

The new Government got over its first session somehow, and in July, 1852, dissolved Parliament, when it was again returned to power without any material change having taken place in the composition of the House. The following December Mr. Disraeli introduced a Budget which he considered to be extremely brilliant, but which provoked much contention in different quarters. His speech in reply to various criticisms was one of his most dazzling and most audacious utterances. With scoffs, gibes, and biting

sarcasms he hit out in every direction, and sought to produce—and almost had produced—upon the House an effect of intimidation. But as he sat down Mr. Gladstone rose to his feet and, although he had not intended to speak, or been prepared to do so, launched forth into an oration which became historic. He gave voice to that indignation which lay suppressed beneath the cowed feeling which for the moment the Chancellor of the Exchequer's performance had left among his hearers. In a few minutes the House was wildly cheering the intrepid champion who had rushed into the breach, and when Mr. Gladstone concluded, having torn to shreds the proposals of the Budget, a majority followed him into the division lobby, and Mr. Disraeli found his Government beaten by nineteen votes. Such was the first great encounter between the two rivals.

Lord Derby resigned at once, and politics were plunged into a condition of the wildest excitement and confusion. Mr. Gladstone was the butt of Protectionist execration. He was near being thrown out of the window at the Carlton Club by twenty extreme Tories, who, coming upstairs after dinner, found him alone in the drawing-room. They did not quite go this length, though they threatened to do so, but contented themselves with insulting him.* The upshot, however, of all the confusion was that a Coalition Government, containing Whigs, Peelites, and even Radicals, was patched together, and that in this Government Mr. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Aberdeen was Prime Minister, and Lord John Russell President of the Council. Sir James Graham and Mr. Sidney Herbert were amongst the Peelites who belonged to it. It was in

* Related in Greville's "Diary." Mr. Russell mentions that Mr. Gladstone remained a member of the Carlton until he joined the Whig Government in 1859.

relation to this administration that Mr. Disraeli, prophesying an early demise for it, made use of the expression, "England does not love coalitions."

No portion of Mr. Gladstone's fame rests upon a more secure foundation than that which is raised upon his achievements in the department of finance. The verdict of authorities is unanimous on this point. Since Pitt, no more original, more brilliant, and sounder financial genius has arisen in British politics. It was as Chancellor of the Exchequer in this Aberdeen Ministry that Mr. Gladstone's first true opportunity to prove himself in this respect arose.

On April 18th, 1853, he introduced the first of his great Budgets, and made the first of his great Budget speeches. The Budget itself was a marvel of ingenious and far-seeing statesmanship. It was a superb effort to equalise taxation ; it remitted a number of taxes which weighed upon the poorer classes and obstructed the free development of business ; it took off no less than £5,000,000 of customs and excise duties ; and it balanced these remissions by applying the succession duty to real property, increasing the duty on spirits, and extending the income tax.

The discovery of new sources of income which the nation did not seriously feel, and which did not obstruct the advance of reform, was the most distinctive feature of this Budget, and of these expedients the daring and brilliant treatment of the succession duty was an idea entirely Mr. Gladstone's own.

With regard to the income tax, Mr. Gladstone unfolded a memorable plan which was doomed to pass into history among the falsified hopes of statesmen. The income tax was to be extinguished in 1860. It was not a tax, he said, which he could consent to retain as a part of the

permanent and ordinary finances of the country. It was a tax for an emergency—for a time of national danger; it had served the country well on exceptional occasions in the past, and it would do so again should crises of the kind recur. But its incidence was too unequal, its investigation into private affairs too harassing, it led to too much fraud, not to render it objectionable as an established perennial feature of the national finance. If the country could not bear a revolution every year, it was as true to say it could not bear a reconstruction of the income tax every year. It is nearly half a century since that statement was made, but the income tax is still with us.

Taking it altogether—its remissions, its discovery of new sources of income, its expedients in equalising taxation, and its projects for the future—this first Budget of Mr. Gladstone's may justly be called the greatest of the century.

The speech in which it was introduced and expounded created an extraordinary impression on the House and the country. For the first time in Parliament figures were made as interesting as a fairy tale; the dry bones of statistics were invested with a new and potent life, and it was shown how the yearly balancing of the national accounts might be directed by and made to promote the profoundest and most fruitful principles of statesmanship. With such lucidity and picturesqueness was this financial oratory rolled forth that the dullest intellect could follow with pleasure the complicated scheme; and for five hours the House of Commons sat as if it were under the sway of a magician's wand. When Mr. Gladstone resumed his seat, it was felt that the career of the coalition Ministry was assured by the genius that was discovered in its Chancellor of the Exchequer. The country was delighted. The Queen and the Prince Consort wrote to Mr. Gladstone congratulating him on his feat.

But, even as Pitt's financial policy was baffled by the contest which he persisted in waging with France, the aims of this first budget of Mr. Gladstone's were doomed to be defeated by the untoward apparition of war. Before the financial year was over the Aberdeen Ministry had committed the country to the expedition to the Crimea, and it became the duty of the most peace-loving of statesmen and thriftiest of financiers to plunge into the colossal extravagances of a War Budget.

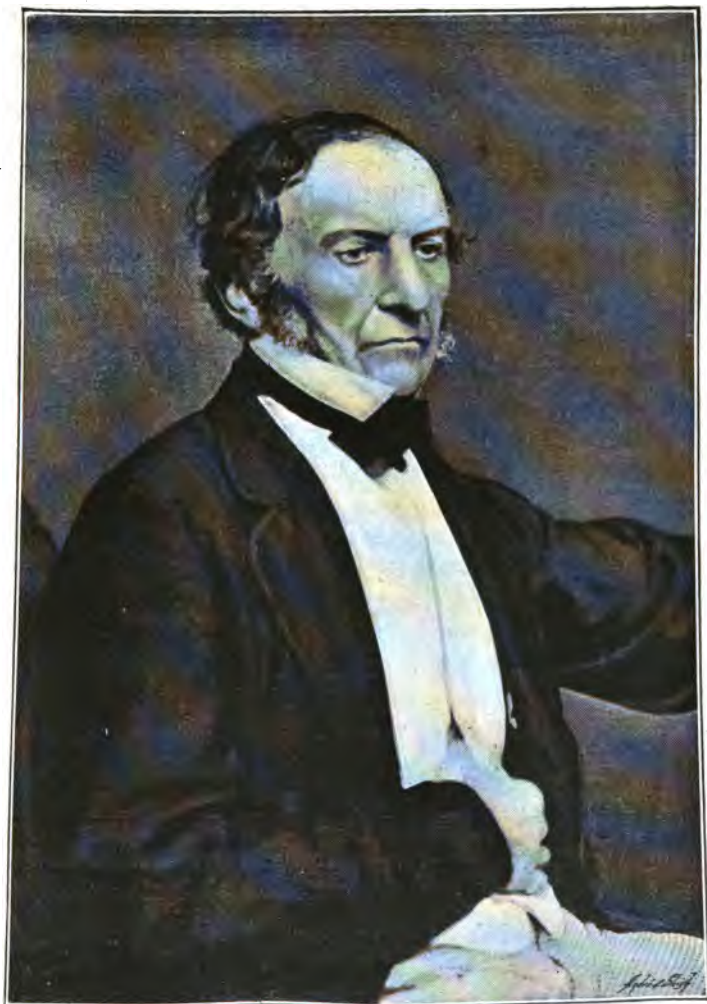
Into the Crimean question it is not necessary to enter here further than to state the issue. The Greek and Latin Churches—Russia championing the one, and France the other—had quarrelled over the custody of the Holy Places of Jerusalem, and out of this dispute arose a claim on the part of Russia to a protectorate over all the Greek subjects of the Sultan—a claim which the Sultan resisted. Whatever may be thought of the policy which resulted in Great Britain taking the field on the side of Turkey in that complication—whether the step be approved on the score of righteousness; whether it be held that England, by a firm diplomacy towards both Turkey and Russia, might have averted the resort to hostilities; whether it be believed that the Ministry knew where they were going, or, paralysed by vacillating counsels, simply “drifted” into war—there is no doubt that Mr. Gladstone took his full share of responsibility for the policy which was adopted, and he never sought to shirk the obligation. “It was,” he said afterwards, “at its commencement . . . not only a just and necessary war, but it could not have been avoided. It was absolutely necessary to cut the meshes of the net in which Russia had entangled Turkey. It was a war carried on by a united people in the name and on behalf of Europe, backed by a European combination and by the authority of European law.”

The conduct of the war, however, was another matter ; and here the position of the Government was less capable of defence. After a dreadful winter had been passed in the Crimea, after four-and-twenty thousand British soldiers had been sacrificed, it had become apparent to all that the usual horrors and mischances of war were in this case aggravated by a mismanagement from home which has seldom been paralleled in history. Lack of food, lack of shelter, lack of clothing, were amongst the ills which brave men had to suffer in consequence of maladministration at headquarters. It was estimated that five-sixths of those who died did so from preventible causes. Mr. Gladstone declared the matter to be one for "weeping all day and praying all night." The seat of the mischief was in the War Department, but the Government, as a whole, had of course to bear the responsibility.

On January 26th, 1855, what proved to be the general feeling of the House found expression in an amendment to the Address, moved by Mr. Roebuck, calling for a Select Committee "to inquire into the condition of our army before Sebastopol, and into the conduct of those departments of the Government whose duty it has been to minister to the wants of that army."

Mr. Gladstone strongly opposed this motion on the ground that such a Committee would be worse than useless, that it would be unprecedented, and that Parliament would in a sense be acting *ultra vires* and creating a dangerous precedent in thus taking over the duties of the executive. But when it went to a division, the motion was carried by the overwhelming majority of 157. Lord Aberdeen thereupon resigned.

The Queen sent for Lord Derby, but Mr. Gladstone and his fellow-Peelites refused to join him, and he failed to



MR. GLADSTONE IN 1855.

(From a photograph by Samuel A. Walker, 230, Regent Street, W.)

form a Ministry. The task fell to Lord Palmerston, who succeeded in getting together a Government, which Mr. Gladstone entered as Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was a noteworthy step in the career of the politician who was destined to be the future leader of the Liberal party; for it was his first service under a chief who was not a Tory. But this first connexion with the Whig Prime Minister did not last long. Within three weeks Mr. Gladstone and his Peelite colleagues left the Government, Lord Palmerston having consented to the appointment of the Committee asked for by Mr. Roebuck—a proceeding which the Peelites felt themselves bound to oppose.

Thenceforward the Peelites—Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, and Sir James Graham—became a group of free lances, isolated from both parties, dangerous and helpful to each in turn. As Mr. Gladstone puts it himself, they were like “roving icebergs, on which men could not land with safety, but with which ships might come into perilous collision.” He in particular roved incessantly over a wide and varied field, devoting special attention to the department of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir George Lewis), whom, as Greville records, he led a weary life. At last, on one of the bye-questions which he had taken up—the behaviour of the British authorities towards the Chinese in the affair of the lorcha *Arrow*—he succeeded in defeating the Government. On March 4th, 1857, a division on this subject placed the Government in a minority of sixteen, and on the following 21st of the same month Parliament was dissolved. The general election which followed gave Lord Palmerston a majority.

Mr. Gladstone, who had been returned for Oxford unopposed, chiefly distinguished himself in this Parliament by his opposition to the Divorce Bill, which the Government

was supporting. He was against divorce on the highest theological grounds. Marriage, he declared, was a "mystery" of the Christian religion. "Our Lord had emphatically told us that at and from the beginning marriage was perpetual, and was on both sides single." "Christian marriage according to Holy Scripture was a lifelong compact which may sometimes be put in abeyance by the separation of a couple, but which can never be rightfully dissolved so as to set them free during their joint lives to unite with other persons. I could not," he said, "regard this measure in any other light except one—namely, as the first instalment of change, the first stage in a road of which we know nothing, except that it is different from that of our forefathers, and that it is a road which leads from the point to which Christianity has brought us and carries us back towards the state in which Christianity found the heathenism of man." His opposition, however, did not avail to prevent the Divorce Bill being carried into law.

At the opening of the second session of this Parliament an occasion arose when his hostility to the Government had more effect. An attempt had been made on the life of the Emperor Napoleon by an Italian named Orsini, who had taken refuge in London. It was said that it was in London Orsini had planned the outrage and manufactured his infernal machine. The French press and Continental opinion generally, which had been horrified by this desperate affair, complained loudly that England was the laboratory and rendezvous of the conspirators against foreign governments, and that this was a state of things favoured by English law. Lord Palmerston introduced a Bill amending the law of conspiracy, the object of which, he said, was to remove this reproach. His enemies declared that he was simply truckling to the French Emperor. The Tories opposed the

Bill vigorously ; many Liberals joined them ; and Mr. Gladstone, at the head of the Peelites, made himself the most potent mouthpiece of this attack. The result was that on a division the Government were beaten by a majority of nineteen. This was in February, 1858.

"Lord Palmerston," said Mr. Gladstone, writing of this defeat in the following number of the *Quarterly Review*, "had kept his seat on the top of Fortune's wheel during such a number of its revolutions as had all but covered what may be termed the utmost space allowed to the activity of human life. But suddenly a difficulty that he had himself created as if for the purpose, by a contempt of the most ordinary caution and the best established customs, caught him in his giddy elevation, and precipitated the old favourite of millions into the depths of the Tartarus of politics almost without a solitary cry of regret to mingle in the crash of his fall, or a word of sympathy to break its force."

This fierce and almost cruel language—referring as it did to an old man then in his seventy-third year—illustrates the extent to which Mr. Gladstone had grown to dislike at this period the Minister under whom he was afterwards to serve again, and no doubt it reflects also some of that strong and not unnatural bitterness which he felt at his own position of isolation and the exclusion from office which it entailed. Both sentiments were still more forcibly expressed in a letter which he had written to a friend the previous autumn : *

"I greatly felt," he wrote, "being turned out of office. I saw great things to do : I longed to do them. I am losing the best years of my life out of my natural service. Yet I have never ceased to rejoice that I am not in office

* Quoted by Mr. Russell.

with Palmerston, when I have seen the tricks, the shufflings, the frauds, he daily has recourse to as to his business. I rejoice not to sit on the Treasury bench with him."

This desire of Mr. Gladstone for office is an element of his character which cannot be overlooked, and we are now at a stage of his career when it requires especial attention. There is no doubt that it was a strong and all but an overmastering desire; but the whole build and tenor of the man's nature have proved that it was as far removed from the vulgar hunger for place which besets the inferior politician as one human passion can be from another. Mr. Gladstone, like all men who feel that they have a mission to set right the mischiefs which they perceive in the world around them, longed intensely to be in the position in which he could carry his mission into effect. Office he deemed to be, in the words above quoted, "his natural service," because office meant the opportunity to fulfil the task which he believed Providence had imposed upon him. This frame of mind, when it accompanies true greatness of intellect and character, is that which makes the leaders of the world. The human will, however, being human, is never quite sure as to the absolute perspicuity of its motives, and it is possible, without exactly impeaching Mr. Gladstone's disinterestedness, to hold that sometimes his course was unconsciously influenced by this dominating idea when he believed he was forming his conclusions upon considerations wholly detached from it.

When Lord Palmerston resigned after his defeat on the Conspiracy Bill, a new Derby-Disraeli Government was formed. Mr. Gladstone, as chief of the Peelites, and a Tory who had not yet wholly broken with his old party, was offered a place in this Administration; but he declined, notwithstanding that Mr. Disraeli, as he has recorded

himself, "almost went on his knees to him" to persuade him to join. His refusal, which is remarkable in view of his avowed anxiety for office, is explained by two facts: one, that his principles were at this time in the middle of that stage of transition which was to end in his conversion to Liberalism pure and simple; the other, that he had already made up his mind that the place for him to occupy was not the second or the third, but the first place. "Gladstone intends to be Prime Minister," wrote his friend, Lord Aberdeen, two years before. There would have been little chance of his ever becoming Prime Minister if he accepted the invitation Mr. Disraeli pressed upon him so urgently. Mr. Disraeli was Leader of the House of Commons, and virtually the master of that Cabinet of which the nominal chief in the Lords was but his tool and confederate. If Mr. Gladstone took office in a subordinate position to his powerful and deadly rival, that rival would have had him under his heel, fixed in that secondary position, in all probability as long as both of them acted together and remained in life and health. Mr. Gladstone was not simple enough to enter such a trap.

What Lord Aberdeen, who since their first acquaintance had ever been his affectionate and admiring friend, looked forward to for him was something quite different, though his notion was still vague—something in the direction of his getting leadership amongst the Whigs. There must be "new combinations," he said to Bishop Wilberforce. "I told John Russell that what I wished to see was, him in the House of Lords, at the head of the Government, and Gladstone leading the Commons. . . . He could trust Gladstone in such a post, which he could hardly any other man."* "Gladstone," said Lord Aberdeen on the same

* "Life of Bishop Wilberforce."

occasion, "has some faults to overcome. He is too obstinate. If a man could be too honest I should say he is too honest. He does not think enough of what other men think." "When he has convinced himself, perhaps by abstract reasoning, of some view, he thinks everyone else ought to see it as he does, and can make no allowance for difference of opinion."

As Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli could not get him to wear their harness in office, they probably thought it as well to keep so dangerous a personage as far out of the pathway of the Administration as possible. At any rate, the Government in this year (1858) asked Mr. Gladstone to visit, as Lord High Commissioner Extraordinary, the Ionian Isles, whose inhabitants, then under English protection, desired to be united to Greece. It was a mission which he accepted with pleasure and discharged with signal address, his sympathy with Hellenic peoples and his knowledge of their language and customs aiding him greatly. He offered the Ionians a self-governing constitution; but what they wanted was union with Greece and the ending of the British protectorate, and this petition the British Government eventually granted.

"In the cession of the Ionian Islands," said Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Manchester a few years later,* "a marked homage was paid to the principles of justice, and we who went about preaching to others that they ought to have regard to national rights, feelings, and traditions showed, by the cession of the protectorate of the Ionian Islands, that we were ready to apply in our own case the rules and maxims which we advised them to apply."

For Mr. Gladstone himself, however, the most important fruit of this period of exclusion from office was the

* October 14th, 1864.

publication of his first work on the subject of Homer—"Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age." Throughout his life the study of Homer—of the text and of the poet, and of the life, the idea, the religion, the ethnology of the Homeric world—has been Mr. Gladstone's chief source of intellectual delight. As Professor Freeman said in speaking of "the intense earnestness, the loftiness of moral purpose which breathed on every page" of this work, he had not taken up Homer as a plaything nor even as a mere literary enjoyment. "To him the study of the Prince of Poets is clearly a means by which himself and other men may be made wiser and better." This "Studies on Homer," a work in three large volumes, was a serious contribution to scholarship and criticism, and it was received in a serious spirit by the scholars, who marvelled at the powers of a genius which while actively engaged upon the labours of a statesman's career could bestow upon a literary subject a wealth of knowledge and thought which would do credit to a specialist who had given to it the undivided energies of his life.



VIEW IN THE IONIAN ISLES.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEVERANCE FROM OXFORD.

Takes Office under Palmerston—A Much-criticised Step—His Financial Reforms—Commercial Treaty with France—Abolition of the Paper Duty—First Encounter with the House of Lords—Palmerstonian Ascendency—Gladstone's Growth in Liberal Principles—Declaration on Franchise and Church Questions—Defeated at Oxford—Final Breaking of Ties with Tory Party.

PARLIAMENT was dissolved on April 23rd, 1859, the Government having been defeated on the second reading of a Bill of Mr. Disraeli's setting up a fantastic scheme of fancy-franchises. Mr. Gladstone, who had been giving the Government his steady support since his return from the Ionian Islands, had declined to oppose them on this occasion. But the majority against them was decisive.

When Parliament met after the elections it was found, on a motion of want of confidence moved by Lord Hartington as an amendment to the Address, that the Whigs were in a majority: the motion was carried by a majority of thirteen. Lord Derby thereupon resigned, and once again Lord Palmerston became Prime Minister. On this occasion Mr. Gladstone took office with him as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

No step of his career has given rise to greater ambiguity of judgment amongst his critics than this. He had just been supporting the Tory Administration of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, and supporting it to the last. He had even voted with Ministers against Lord Hartington's amendment; and we have seen what, but a little time before, the sentiments were which he entertained with regard to Lord Palmerston. Yet here he was within one week ready to sit

with Lord Palmerston on the Treasury bench and become one of the pillars of the Whigs. Was it his overmastering desire for office and the conviction that now was his chance or never which precipitated him upon this decision, or had he so far and so rapidly grown in Liberal principles that in so changing his allegiance he was acting in entire accord with his political conscience? Such were the questions which men asked themselves at the time. Posterity, which has his whole life to judge from, may well conclude that whatever influence the first consideration had in helping the speed of his conversion, he was by this time well under the sway of those Liberal principles—those principles of “trust in the people tempered by prudence”—which were to become the guiding light of his subsequent career, and in the direction of which it was his fate to continue developing and extending as long as he remained in public life. That life, however, it must be admitted, contains many inconsistencies which are a puzzle to the plain man, and this step was certainly one of them.

In Oxford, for which he had been returned unopposed at the General Election, he was vigorously assailed when he sought re-election on taking office. Professor Mansel, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, issued a manifesto in which he thus summarised the case against him: “By his vote on the late division Mr. Gladstone expressed his confidence in the Administration of Lord Derby. By accepting office, he now expresses his confidence in the Administration of Lord Derby's opponent and successor.”

Mr. Gladstone, in a reply addressed to the Provost of Oriel, thus explained his action:

Various differences of opinion, both on foreign and domestic matters, separated me, during great part of the Administration of Lord Palmerston, from a body of men with the majority of whom I had

acted, and had acted in perfect harmony, under Lord Aberdeen. I promoted the vote of the House of Commons, in February of last year, which led to the downfall of that Ministry. Such having been the case, I thought it my clear duty to support, as far as I was able, the Government of Lord Derby. Accordingly, on the various occasions during the existence of the late Parliament when they were seriously threatened with danger of embarrassment, I found myself, like many other independent members, lending them such assistance as was in my power. And, although I could not concur in the late Reform Bill, and considered the dissolution to be singularly ill-advised, I still was unwilling to found on such disapproval a vote in favour of the motion of Lord Hartington, which appeared to imply a course of previous opposition, and which has been the immediate cause of the change of Ministers. Under these circumstances it was, I think, manifest that, while I had not the smallest claim on the victorious party, my duty as towards the late advisers of the Crown had been fully discharged.

Lord Chandos opposed him as Tory candidate, but the new Whig Minister was re-elected by a majority of 191.

Mr. Gladstone's first great achievement in this Administration was the Budget which he introduced in February, 1860. This scheme embodied the commercial treaty with France which Mr. Cobden—whose idea it was—had negotiated with the Emperor Napoleon, a treaty according to which France undertook to remove all prohibitory duties on British manufactures, and to reduce the duties on British raw materials ; while Great Britain was to abolish duties on foreign manufactures and to reduce the duties on foreign wines. It was an important extension of the policy of Free Trade. A not less remarkable feature of the Budget, and one which was to have a memorable constitutional consequence, was the abolition of the duty on paper. The paper duty, besides being economically in the same category as the soap duty, the glass duty, and the other duties of excise upon manufactured articles which the Free Traders had already repealed, constituted one of the heaviest of the taxes

on knowledge. From its abolition was to date the era of the cheap press.

This Budget was a worthy sequel to the great scheme of 1853; it brought into effective motion the series of financial reforms which during this and the following years became inseparably associated with Mr. Gladstone's name. These reforms between 1853 and 1866 represented in remissions of national burdens a balance of £13,000,000.

Mr. Greville's diary gives us the best notion of the impression which this Budget produced. He writes:

February 15.—When I left London a fortnight ago the world was anxiously expecting Gladstone's speech, in which he was to put the Commercial Treaty and the Budget before the world. His own confidence and that of most of his colleagues in his success was unbounded, but many inveighed bitterly against the Treaty, and looked forward with great alarm and aversion to the Budget. Clarendon shook his head, Overstone pronounced against the Treaty, the *Times* thundered against it, and there is little doubt that it was unpopular, and becoming more so every day. Then came Gladstone's unlucky illness, which compelled him to put off his *exposé* and made it doubtful whether he would not be physically disabled from doing justice to the subject. His doctor says he ought to have taken two months' rest instead of two days. However, at the end of his two days' delay he came forth, and *consensu omnium* achieved one of the greatest triumphs that the House of Commons ever witnessed. Everybody I have heard from admits that it was a magnificent display not to be surpassed in ability of execution, and that he carried the House of Commons completely with him. I can well believe it, for when I read the report of it next day, it carried me along with it likewise.

February 22.—I returned to town on Monday. The same night a battle took place in the House of Commons, in which Gladstone signally defeated Disraeli, and Government got so good a majority that it looks like the harbinger of complete success for their Treaty and their Budget. Everybody agrees nothing could be more brilliant and complete than Gladstone's triumph.

February 26.—On Friday night Gladstone had another great triumph. He made a splendid speech, and maintained a majority of 116, which puts an end to the conquest. He is now *the* great man of

the day. . . . Clarendon, who watches him and has means of knowing his disposition, thinks that he is moving towards a Democratic union with Bright, the effect of which will be increased income tax, and lowering the Estimates by giving up the defences of the country.

Great though this triumph was, however, it was not a complete one, for while the Commercial Treaty was hailed with universal approval, the proposal to abolish the paper duty aroused an antagonism which, for the time being, proved fatal to that portion of the Budget. The paper trade organised itself in defence of what it believed to be its interests ; so did the proprietors of expensive newspapers ; they were joined in their protests by reactionaries of every type, whose distrust of the masses of the people led them to hate and fear the prospect of knowledge being spread, as it were, broadcast amongst them. This opposition had its effect upon the House of Commons ; the majority of fifty-three, which carried the second reading of the Bill, fell off to nine on the third reading. The Prime Minister himself was one of those who covertly disliked the measure, and he even went so far as to say so in his nightly letter to the Queen. Writing behind his Chancellor's back with reference to the lessened majority on the third reading, he expressed himself in these extraordinary terms : " This may probably encourage the House of Lords to throw out the Bill when it comes to their House, and Viscount Palmerston is bound in duty to say that if they do so they will perform a good public service."

Whether they needed this encouragement or not, their lordships did throw the measure out. By a majority of eighty-nine they rejected the Bill which provided for the abolition of the duty on paper. It was an act which had unlooked-for consequences. It raised the great fundamental question of the respective functions of the House of Lords

and the House of Commons in regard to the levying of taxation and the granting of supplies. No principle of the British Constitution is more settled than that it is the right and the privilege of the Commons to fix the taxation of the kingdom. The Lords in rejecting the Paper Duty Bill had distinctly contravened that principle; they committed an act almost tantamount to usurpation in interfering with the provisions of the Budget at all, but their course was doubly obnoxious inasmuch as they sought to continue a tax after the Commons had decided to remit it. Mr. Gladstone took the strongest view of the unconstitutional character of this proceeding. He described the action of the Lords as "a gigantic innovation"; he declared that the House of Commons was under the most solemn obligation to preserve its deposit of popular rights in this matter intact; and when a Committee, to which Lord Palmerston had consented, had drawn up a somewhat vague report upon the precedent, he made the announcement that he reserved to himself the right to take such action as should give effect to the will of the House of Commons.

His opportunity came with the Budget of the following year, when, by a simple but extremely ingenious device, he rendered it thenceforth impossible for the Lords to repeat such meddling in taxation as they had attempted in the case of the paper duty. Previously it had been the custom of Governments to divide the various provisions of the Budget into a series of separate Bills. In the Budget of 1861 Mr. Gladstone embodied them all, and they included this time the repeal of the paper duty, in a single measure, thus rendering it necessary for the Lords to take the responsibility of throwing out the Budget as a whole if they desired to cancel any of its parts. One noble lord was daring enough to urge upon his

colleagues the heroic course of total rejection; but his colleagues took a more prudent view, and thus the paper duty was abolished. Ever since, the mode of procedure thus inaugurated by Mr. Gladstone has become the fixed custom of Governments. The effect has been to put an end to the last vestige of the Peers' powers in the matter of finance. It was Mr. Gladstone's first blow at the House of Lords.

It is to be noted, however, that it was a blow not at the privileges of the Lords, but at their encroachments upon the privileges of the Commons. Somebody declared at the time that it was a mortal stab at the Constitution. "I want to know," said Mr. Gladstone, "to what Constitution does it give a mortal stab? In my opinion it gives no mortal stab, and no stab at all, to any Constitution that we are bound to care for. But, on the contrary, so far as it alters anything in the most recent course of practice, it alters in the direction of restoring that good old Constitution which took its root in Saxon times, which grew under the Plantagenets, which endured the iron repression of the Tudors, which resisted the aggressions of the Stuarts, and which has come to its full maturity under the House of Brunswick. I think that is the Constitution, if I may presume to say so, which it is our duty to guard, and which—if the proceedings of this year can be said to affect it at all—will be all the better for the operation. But the Constitution which my right honourable friend worships is a very different affair. The Constitution as laid down by my right honourable friend began with this: 'There is no vital division of function and office between the House of Commons and the House of Lords with regard to fixing the income and charge of the country from year to year, both being equally responsible,' which simply means that neither will be responsible at all. Now, so far as that Constitution

is concerned, I at once confess my strong conviction that the sooner it receives a mortal stab the better."

The effect of repealing the paper duty was described some years afterwards by Mr. Gladstone in a speech which he delivered at Manchester. "Talk of Conservative measures!" he said; "never was there a measure so Conservative as that which called into vivid, energetic, permanent, and successful action the cheap press of this country. To the most numerous classes of the community it was like a new light, a new epoch in life, when they found that the information upon public affairs that had once been either the exclusive property of the higher, or the higher with the middle class, or else had been doled out to them through the rare and questionable medium of Sunday papers, came to them morning after morning, gave them a new interest in the affairs of their country, and, with a new interest in these affairs, a new attachment to its institutions."

Mr. Gladstone had been elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University in 1860, when he delivered an inaugural address on the work of universities. The following year he further manifested his interest in the work of education by a striking letter which he addressed to a member of the Royal Commission on Public Schools on the subject of classical studies.

Office, triumph, congenial labour in his "natural service," seem to have exercised a cheering effect on the spirits of this earnest statesman, for we find about this time the following somewhat startling entry in Lord Malmesbury's diary: "Gladstone, who was always fond of music, is now quite enthusiastic about negro melodies, singing them with the greatest spirit and enjoyment, never leaving out a verse, and evidently preferring such as 'Camp Town Races.'"



MR. GLADSTONE IN 1859.

(From a photograph by Samuel A. Walker, 230, Regent Street W.)

The Prince Consort died in December, 1861, and the following April Mr. Gladstone, before an association of Mechanics' Institutes at Manchester, delivered a noble panegyric on the dead Prince.

In 1862, the Civil War having been raging for some time in America, Gladstone uttered at Newcastle his famous dictum about the South. "Jefferson Davis," he said, "and the other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made, gentlemen, what is more than either—they have made a nation." Years afterwards he publicly confessed to the rashness and error of this opinion. "I have learnt," he wrote to Mr. Cyrus Field in 1868, "to be more cautious in taking the measure of American possibilities."

The progress of the cause of Italian independence was more in accordance with the direction of his sympathies. He was one of those who welcomed Garibaldi to London in 1864. He met the outlawed patriot at Sir Antonio Panizzi's, and he describes "the marvellous effect produced upon all minds by the simple nobility of his demeanour, by his manners, and by his acts." Garibaldi, Cavour, Victor Emmanuel—"these three names together," said he, in a burst of rhetoric, many years afterwards, when Italian unity had become an accomplished fact, "form for Italians a tricolour as brilliant, as ever fresh, and I hope as enduring, for many and many generations, as that national flag which now waves over a United Italy."

This was the true period of Palmerstonian ascendancy. It was a time of great commercial prosperity, and in all parts of the kingdom, save in Ireland, of comparative contentment. Lord Palmerston, a genial, bantering, horse-racing old aristocrat, whose specific for government was to chaff and do nothing at home, and to bluster and do



THE MEETING OF GARIBALDI AND VICTOR EMMANUEL, OCTOBER, 1860.

nothing abroad, suited admirably the mood of the hour. But from this indifferentism there was bound one day to come a reaction, and already occasional symptoms of the stormier future in store were beginning to appear. One of these symptoms was seen in the fact that reformers in the House and in the country began more and more to turn towards Mr. Gladstone. The manifestly sincere, the passionate, the intensely serious character of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was as refreshment and inspiration to these earnest souls, all the more so because of the extraordinary contrast it presented to the airy, not to say raffish, Laodiceanism of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Gladstone's popular sympathies were showing themselves more pronounced; he was spoken of as the coming Prime Minister of a truly Liberal Government. In Oxford the spirits of reaction began to growl at the degeneracy of their representative.

On two occasions in this Parliament his development in this direction was notably signalised. One was on the second reading (on May 11th, 1864) of a private member's Bill for reducing the parliamentary franchise in boroughs. Mr. Gladstone delivered a speech in support of the reduction, and used remarkable language in defending the working-man's right to vote and his fitness for the franchise. In this speech, moreover, occurred a striking passage with reference to what he called the "danger-signal" of politics.

We are told (he said) that the working classes don't agitate; but is it desirable that we should wait until they do agitate? In my opinion, agitation by the working classes upon any political subject whatever is a thing not to be waited for, not to be made a condition previous to any parliamentary movement, but, on the contrary, is to be deprecated, and, if possible, prevented by wise and provident measures. An agitation by the working classes is not like an agitation by the classes above them having leisure. The agitation of the classes having leisure is

easily conducted. Every hour of their time has not a money value; their wives and children are not dependent on the application of those hours of labour. When a working-man finds himself in such a condition that he must abandon that daily labour on which he is strictly dependent for his daily bread, it is only because then, in railway language, the danger-signal is turned on, and because he feels a strong necessity for action, and a distrust of the rulers who have driven him to that necessity. The present state of things, I rejoice to say, does not indicate that distrust; but if we admit that, we must not allege the absence of agitation on the part of the working classes as a reason why the Parliament of England and the public mind of England should be indisposed to entertain the discussion of this question.

The second utterance we refer to was a speech which he delivered towards the close of March, 1865, on the subject of the Irish Church. Mr. Dillwyn proposed the motion "That the present position of the Irish Church is unsatisfactory, and calls for the early attention of Her Majesty's Government." While declining to vote for this motion on the ground that it was not a matter to which the Government could give its "early" attention, Mr. Gladstone declared that the abstract truth of the former part of the resolution could not be denied. He could come to no other conclusion, he said, than that the Irish Church, as she then stood, was in a false position. This was Mr. Gladstone's first formal utterance in Parliament against an Establishment which he was ultimately to abolish.

For Oxford this speech filled the cup of his offending to the full. An active campaign was opened against him, even before the general election of 1865, which, however, was then in sight, was announced. The Churchmen cast him off, all but one or two faithful friends like Bishop Wilberforce (Bishop of Oxford) and the Rector of Exeter College. Mr. Gathorne Hardy, afterwards Lord Cranbrook, a High Tory of thoroughly satisfactory principles, was selected to oppose him. Parliament was dissolved on July 6th, 1865, and when

the poll at Oxford was declared on July 18th, the University was found to have rejected at last her most devoted son.

Mr. Gladstone felt this casting out of him by his Alma Mater very deeply. We have seen from the account of his earlier years how much he loved the University, how closely the cast of his mind harmonised with the scholastic and ecclesiastical spirit of that ancient seat of learning and religion, and how proud he was to be her selected champion. But he bore the trial with the quiet dignity which always distinguished him at such moments in his career, and he bade adieu to the University in an affectionate and touching valedictory address.

A private letter which he wrote at this time to Bishop Wilberforce contained a passage of peculiar interest. "Do not join with others," he wrote, "in praising me, because I am not angry, only sorry, and that deeply. For my revenge—which I do not desire, but would baffle if I could—all lies in that little word '*Future*' in my address, which I wrote with a consciousness that it is deeply charged with meaning, and that that which shall come will come. There have been two great deaths, or transmigrations of spirit, in my political existence—one, very slow, the breaking of ties with my original party; the other, very short and sharp, the breaking of the tie with Oxford. There will probably be a third, and no more." This latter sentence the Bishop intimated he did not understand; upon which Mr. Gladstone replied, "The oracular sentence has little bearing on present affairs or prospects, and may stand in its proper darkness."

Now that his political existence is over, may we not recognise in this oracular sentence a true prophetic insight, and set down the third "death or transmigration of spirit" as the rupture which took place in the Liberal party in 1886 when he embraced the policy of Home Rule?

CHAPTER VII.

"THE PEOPLE'S WILLIAM."

"Unmuzzled"—The Full Flowering of his Liberalism—Unfolding his Creed—Leader of the House—The "Banner" Speech—Tory Opposition to Franchise Bill—Excitement in Country—The Hyde Park Railings—Gladstone a Popular Hero—Cynical Manceuvre of Derby-Disraeli Government—"Dishing the Whigs."

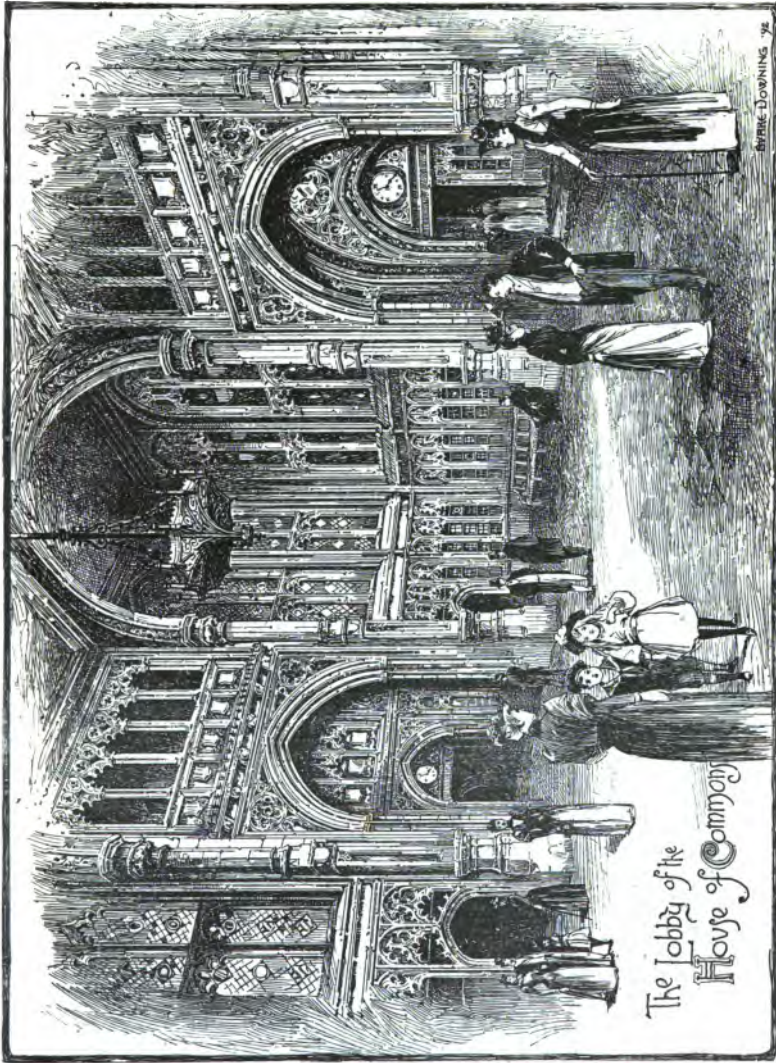
THE severance from Oxford, painful though he felt it, really freed Mr. Gladstone's political spirit from trammels which had been oppressing it. It was with a sense of emancipation, a new elasticity, he bounded into the political conflict when the tie was finally cut, and from this passage may be dated the genuinely whole-hearted, the unrestrained and enthusiastic period of his Liberalism. Leaving Oxford behind him for evermore he threw himself, so to speak, upon the heart of the country. When he arrived at Manchester to contest the great constituency of South Lancashire—the constituency in which his native place was situated—he announced to an enormous meeting in the Free Trade Hall that he was "unmuzzled." "At last, my friends," he said, "I am come among you—and I am come among you, to use an expression which has become very famous and is not likely to be forgotten—I am come among you 'unmuzzled !'" This was the opening sentence of his speech, and both in itself and in the wild tempest of enthusiasm, of popular enthusiasm, which it aroused, it was significant of the new chapter which had opened in his life. He continued as follows—it is well to give a rather longish extract from this declaration, as it is the first broad exposition of what may be called the full flowering of his Liberal faith :—

After an anxious struggle of eighteen years, during which the unbounded devotion and indulgence of my friends have maintained me in

the arduous position of representative of the University of Oxford, I have been driven from that position. . . . But do not let me come among you under false colours or with false pretences. I have loved the University of Oxford with a deep and passionate love, and as long as I live that attachment will continue. If my affection is of the smallest advantage to that great, that ancient, that noble institution, that advantage—such as it is, and it is most insignificant—Oxford will possess as long as I breathe. But don't mistake the issue which has been raised. The University has at length, after eighteen years of self-denial, been drawn by what I might, perhaps, call the overweening exercise of power into the vortex of mere party politics. Well, you will readily understand why, as long as I had a hope that the zeal and kindness of my friends might keep me in my place, it was impossible for me to abandon them. Could they have returned me by but a majority of one, painful as it is to a man at my time of life, and feeling the weight of public cares, to be incessantly struggling for his seat, nothing could have induced me to quit that University to which I had so long ago devoted my best care and attachment. But by no act of mine I am free to come among you. And having been thus set free, I need hardly tell you that it is with joy, with thankfulness and enthusiasm, that I now, at this eleventh hour, a candidate without an address, make my appeal to the heart and the mind of South Lancashire, and ask you to pronounce upon that appeal. As I have said, I am aware of no cause for the votes which have been given in considerable majority against me in the University of Oxford except the fact that the strongest conviction that the human mind can receive, that an overpowering sense of the public interests, that the practical teachings of experience, to which from my first youth Oxford herself taught me to lay open my mind: all these have shown me the folly—I will say the madness—of refusing to join in the generous sympathies of my countrymen by adopting what I must call an obstructive policy.

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Without entering into details, without unrolling the long record of all the great measures that have been passed—the emancipation of Roman Catholics; the removal of tests from Dissenters; the emancipation of the slaves; the reformation of the Poor Law; the reformation—I had almost said the destruction, but it is the reformation—of the Tariff; the abolition of the Corn Laws; the abolition of the Navigation Laws; the conclusion of the French Treaty; the laws which have relieved Dissenters from stigma and almost ignominy, and which in doing



The Lobby of the
House of Commons

so have not weakened, but have strengthened, the Church to which I belong—all these great acts accomplished with the same, I had almost said sublime, tranquillity of the whole country as that with which your own vast machinery performs its appointed task, as it were in perfect repose—all these things have been done. You have seen the acts. You have seen the fruits. It is natural to inquire who have been the doers. In a very humble measure, and yet according to the degree and capacity of the powers which Providence has bestowed upon me, I have been desirous not to obstruct, but to promote and assist, this beneficent and blessed process. And if I entered Parliament, as I did enter Parliament, with a warm and anxious desire to maintain the institutions of my country, I can truly say that there is no period of my life during which my conscience is so clear, and renders me so good an answer, as those years in which I have co-operated in the promotion of Liberal measures. . . . Because they are Liberal, they are the true measures, and indicate the true policy by which the country is made strong and its institutions preserved.

He went on to Liverpool the same afternoon, and at the amphitheatre there he said :—

Long has Oxford borne with me ; long, in spite of active opposition, did she resist every effort to displace me. At last she has changed her mind. God grant it may be well with her ; but the recollection of her confidence which I had so long enjoyed, and of the many years I have spent in her service, never can depart from me ; and if now I appear before you in a different position, I do not appear as another man. . . . If the future of the University is to be as glorious as her past, the result must be brought about by enlarging her borders, by opening her doors, by invigorating her powers, by endeavouring to rise to the heights of that vocation with which, I believe, it has pleased the Almighty to endow her. I see represented in that ancient institution the most prominent features that relate to the past of England. I come into South Lancashire, and find here around me an assemblage of different phenomena. I find the development of industry. I find the growth of enterprise. I find the progress of social philanthropy. I find the prevalence of toleration. I find an ardent desire for freedom. . . .

If there be one duty more than another incumbent upon the public men of England, it is to establish and maintain harmony between the past of our glorious history and the future which is still in store for her. . . . I am if possible more firmly attached to the institutions

of my country than I was when, a boy, I wandered among the sand-hills of Seaforth. But experience has brought with it its lessons. I have learned that there is wisdom in a policy of trust, and folly in a policy of mistrust. I have observed the effect which has been produced by Liberal legislation ; and if we are told that the feeling of the country is in the best and broadest sense Conservative, honesty compels us to admit that that result has been brought about by Liberal legislation.

Mr. Gladstone was returned for South Lancashire, but not at the head of the poll. There were three members returned for this constituency, and of the six candidates who entered the contest, he came out third on the list. He headed the poll, however, in Liverpool, Manchester, and the large towns.

The General Election resulted in a majority for the Liberals, and Lord Palmerston continued in office. But a great change in the situation presently took place. On October 18th, at the age of eighty, Lord Palmerston died.

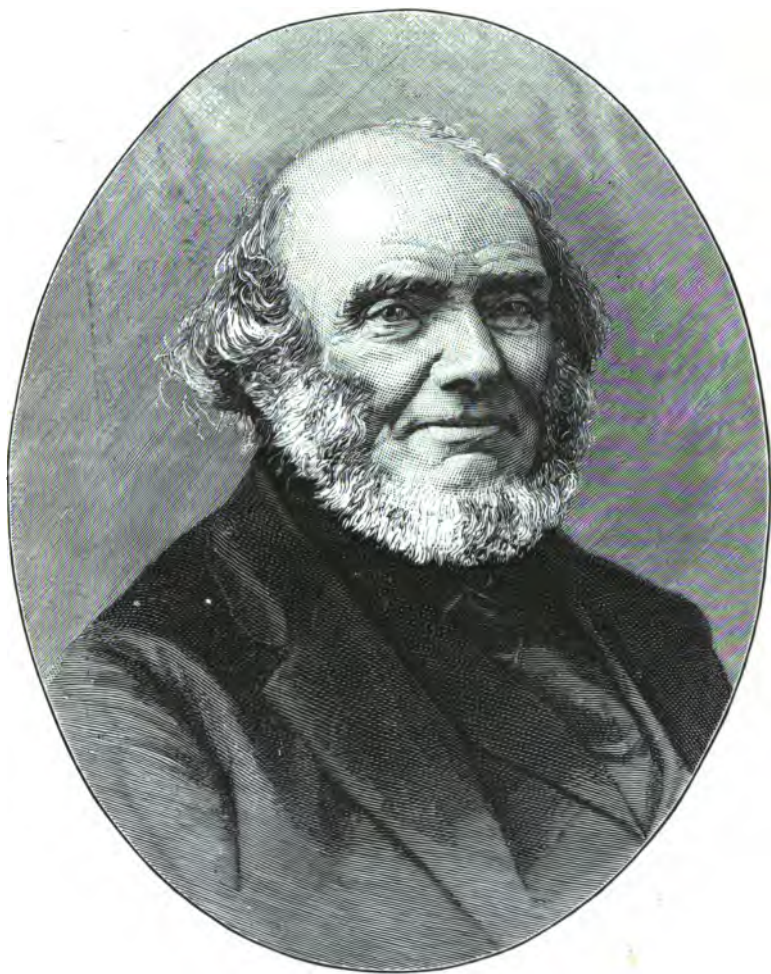
The Queen sent for her "old and tried friend" Lord Russell, who had been Foreign Secretary under Lord Palmerston, and he reorganised the Government. He became Prime Minister himself—in the House of Lords, to which he had been raised—with Mr. Gladstone, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, leading the House of Commons—exactly the conjunction of affairs which Lord Aberdeen had been desiderating in 1860.

As Leader of the House, Mr. Gladstone was a totally unknown quantity, and the contrast between this earnest, headstrong, seemingly almost erratic genius and the easy-going and placatory Lord Palmerston was so great that many men were uneasy as to what was likely to happen. But Mr. Gladstone, who whenever he was in the same position throughout the rest of his career proved himself one of the most successful Leaders of the House a Government has ever had, soon allayed the fears of his friends.

His chivalrous, old-fashioned, and yet perfectly simple courtesy, which impelled him to treat with the utmost attention and respect the remarks of the most inconsiderable member, coupled with his marvellous Parliamentary tactique and his unequalled readiness and power in debate, proved him an ideal Parliamentary leader. As Bishop Wilberforce wrote, he rose entirely to the position.

His first great duty in the new Parliament was to introduce Lord John Russell's Reform Bill—a measure for extending the franchise in boroughs and counties which would have the effect of adding about 400,000 new voters to the electorate. In winding up the debate on the second reading of this Bill, he delivered what has been deemed by many critics as the most eloquent and effective speech of his life ; it was known from a metaphor in its peroration as the “ banner ” speech. Mr. Disraeli had taunted him with the speech which he had delivered in his undergraduate days in the Oxford Union against the Reform Bill of 1832. To these taunts Mr. Gladstone thus replied :—

The right hon. gentleman, secure in the recollection of his own consistency, has taunted me with the errors of my boyhood. When he addressed the hon. member for Westminster, he showed his magnanimity by declaring that he would not take the philosopher to task for what he wrote twenty-five years ago ; but when he caught one who, thirty-six years ago, just emerged from boyhood, and still an undergraduate at Oxford, had expressed an opinion adverse to the Reform Bill of 1832, of which he had so long and bitterly repented, then the right hon. gentleman could not resist the temptation. He, a parliamentary leader of twenty years' standing, is so ignorant of the House of Commons that he positively thought he got a parliamentary advantage by exhibiting me as an opponent of the Reform Bill of 1832. As the right hon. gentleman has exhibited me, let me exhibit myself. It is true, I deeply regret it, but I was bred under the shadow of the great name of Canning : every influence connected with that name governed the politics of my childhood and of my youth ; with Canning, I rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities, and in the character



EARL RUSSELL.
(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry.)

which he gave to our policy abroad ; with Canning, I rejoiced in the opening which he made towards the establishment of free commercial interchanges between nations ; with Canning, and under the shadow of that great name, and under the shadow of that yet more venerable name of Burke, I grant, my youthful mind and imagination were impressed just the same as the mature mind of the right hon. gentleman is now impressed. I had conceived that fear and alarm of the first Reform Bill in the days of my undergraduate career at Oxford which the right hon. gentleman now feels ; and the only difference between us is this—I thank him for bringing it out—that, having those views, I moved the Oxford Union Debating Society to express them clearly, plainly, forcibly, in downright English, and that the right hon. gentleman is still obliged to skulk under the cover of the amendment of the noble lord. I envy him not one particle of the polemical advantage which he has gained by his discreet reference to the proceedings of the Oxford Union Debating Society in the year of grace 1831. My position, sir, in regard to the Liberal party is in all points the opposite of Earl Russell's. . . . I have none of the claims he possesses. I came among you an outcast from those with whom I associated, driven from them, I admit, by no arbitrary act, but by the slow and resistless forces of conviction. I came among you, to make use of the legal phraseology, *in formâ pauperis*. I had nothing to offer you but faithful and honourable service. You received me, as Dido received the shipwrecked Æneas—

Ejectum littore egentem

Excepi,

and I only trust you may not hereafter at any time have to complete the sentence in regard to me—

Et regni demens in parte locavi.

You received me with kindness, indulgence, generosity, and I may even say with some measure of confidence. And the relation between us has assumed such a form that you can never be my debtors, but that I must for ever be in your debt. It is not from me, under such circumstances, that any word will proceed that can savour of the character which the right hon. gentleman imputes to the conduct of the Government with respect to the present Bill.

The impassioned utterance thus concluded :—

Sir, we are assailed ; this Bill is in a state of crisis and of peril, and the Government along with it. We stand or fall with it, as has been declared by my noble friend Lord Russell. We stand with it now ; we

may fall with it a short time hence. If we do so fall, we, or others in our places, shall rise with it hereafter. I shall not attempt to measure with precision the forces that are to be arrayed against us in the coming issue. Perhaps the great division of to-night is not the last that must take place in the struggle. At some point of the contest you may possibly succeed. You may drive us from our seats. You may bury the Bill that we have introduced, but we will write upon its gravestone, for an epitaph, this line, with certain confidence in its fulfilment—

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.

You cannot fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onwards in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb—those great social forces are against you : they are marshalled on our side ; and the banner which we now carry into this fight, though perhaps at some moment it may droop over our sinking heads, yet it soon again will float in the eye of Heaven, and it will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain, and to a not far distant, victory.

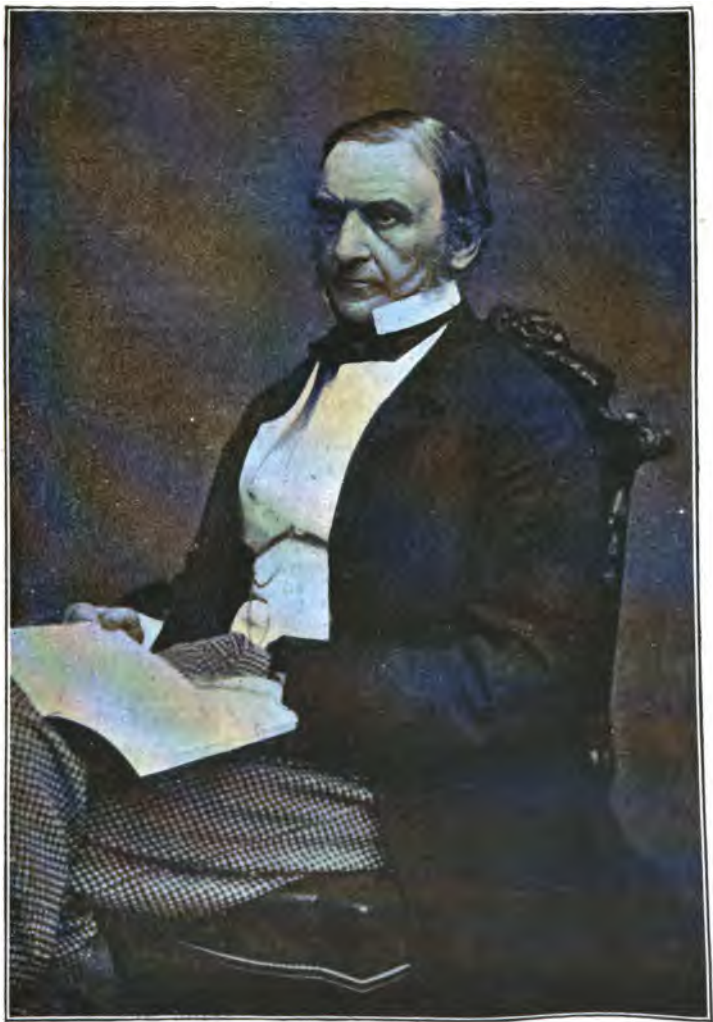
The effect of this speech both on the House and the country may be imagined. A gentleman relates that reading it in the newspaper next day while he was waiting at a railway station he became so excited that when he came to the peroration he began to read it aloud. He was surprised to find that a group of railway porters and passengers had surrounded him and were cheering with enthusiasm the mighty periods as he rolled them forth.

But the measure thus brilliantly presented was not destined to pass into law, although Mr. Gladstone's prophecy as to the principle it enshrined was soon to receive a remarkable fulfilment. A group of that class of men by whom it is the fate of the Liberal party to be periodically embarrassed—men who, when they have gone a certain distance in support of Liberal ideas, stand still, or turn back and become more reactionary than the Tories—organised a resistance to the Bill. Mr. Bright likened these deserters, in a phrase which became famous, to the distressed and

discontented who were invited to retire into the cave of Adullam. Chief amongst this group, but differentiated from them by his intellectual power, was Mr. Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke, who, in his denunciation of the measure and of its tendency, displayed a marvellous eloquence which raised him to the front rank of Parliamentary orators. The keynotes of Mr. Lowe's speeches, which deserve consideration as not only the only philosophic, but, as subsequent events were to prove, the only sincere criticism in opposition to the Bill, may be found in two brief extracts.

"Monarchies," he said, "exist by loyalty, aristocracies by honour, popular assemblies by political virtue. When these things begin to fail, it is in their loss, and not in comets, eclipses, and earthquakes, that we are to look for the portents that herald the fall of states." And again: "We are about to exchange certain good for more than doubtful change; we are about to barter maxims and traditions that never failed for theories and doctrines that never succeeded. Democracy you may have at any time. Night and day the gate is open that leads to that bare and level plain where every ant's nest is a mountain and every thistle a forest-tree. But a Government such as that of England is the work of no human hand. It has grown up by the imperceptible aggregation of centuries. It is a thing which we only can enjoy, which we cannot impart to others, and which, once lost, we cannot recover for ourselves." The keynote of the opposition of the lesser men was that the Bill was, on Mr. Gladstone's part, simply another bid for power.

The opposition prevailed. The second reading of the Bill was only carried by a majority of five; when it got into Committee the Government—on June 18th, on an amendment of Lord Dunkellin's—were defeated.



MR. GLADSTONE IN 1865.

(From a photograph by Samuel A. Walker, 230, Regent Street, W.)

Lord Russell resigned without dissolving Parliament ; and then was formed the third Derby-Disraeli Administration —the Administration which was to earn the sinister distinction of inaugurating a new era in English Parliamentary morals by bringing in, almost as soon as it was installed, the very reform through opposing which it had got into office.

The moment the Government changed hands it became clear that the country was stirred to its depths on this Franchise question. A series of great popular demonstrations in favour of reform began throughout the kingdom. In London the excitement reached such a height that the Government felt it necessary to forbid a meeting which was announced to be held in Hyde Park. This step led to a formidable riot ; the people proceeded to Hyde Park notwithstanding the injunction, and when they found the gates locked and barred by the police, they tore down the railings. After a meeting in Trafalgar Square, which was attended by ten thousand persons, the crowd marched to Carlton House Terrace, singing litanies and hymns in honour of Mr. Gladstone. It was the beginning of his career as a popular hero, the period when he began to be described as "the People's William." Everywhere at the demonstrations his name evoked enthusiasm. The agitation continued throughout the winter, while Parliament was in recess, its fire being fed by the eloquence of another great orator, the "tribune of the people," Mr. John Bright.

Before this manifestation of public opinion the Government which had opposed Lord Russell's Reform Bill was unable to maintain its attitude of resistance, and, since its object was to remain in office, it did not resign, but yielded to the popular demand. When Parliament met in February, the Queen's Speech contained an announcement that attention would be called to the question of the

representation of the people ; and on the 25th of the month Mr. Disraeli unfolded a scheme for the reduction of the Franchise in boroughs, which he proposed to submit to the House in the form of resolutions. Mr. Gladstone and the bulk of the Opposition demanded that instead of resolutions the Government should bring in a Bill. The Government was nothing if not complaisant in this matter, so Mr. Disraeli agreed to oblige with a Bill. Accordingly, on the 18th of March, 1867, the Tory Reform Bill was introduced.

It provided for the extension of the franchise to electors in boroughs who paid rates, or twenty shillings in direct taxes ; and to certain classes who possessed a stipulated educational qualification, or had a stated sum in the funds or the savings-banks. A second vote was given to householders. There were several other checks based on residence, rating, plural voting, etc., devised with a view to guard against the effect of estimating political power by the mere counting of votes. There was likewise to be a redistribution of seats. Mr. Gladstone welcomed the measure as a concession, but complained of its inadequacy, and denounced its checks and safeguards as absurd and illusory ; the first Ministry whose purpose it suited would drop them. He demanded lodger franchise, the omission of the dual vote, the omission of the taxpaying, the educational and the savings-bank franchises, an enlargement of the redistribution of seats, and a reduction of the county franchise. Every one of these and other demands was yielded in committee. The Bill was completely transformed in accordance with the desires of the Opposition into a measure more liberal than Lord Russell's Bill. One noble lord remarked, when it went up to the Gilded Chamber, that the only word which stood unaltered in it was the opening word "Whereas."

This extraordinary political manœuvre of the Tory party was not executed without producing some indignation and dismay within its ranks. It was the definitive abandonment of its political virtue by a great party with great traditions, and the real wonder is that the difficulty of the conquest was not greater and the cries of protest not louder and more numerous. Three members of the Government resigned, but their places were filled with alacrity. The three were Lord Cranbourne, afterwards Lord Salisbury, Lord Carnarvon, and General Peel. It is interesting to note what the sentiments of the future leader of the Tory party were on this occasion. If the Conservative party accepted the Bill, said Lord Cranbourne, they would be "committing political suicide." If the adoption of the principles of Mr. Bright could be described as a triumph, then, indeed, the Conservative party in the whole history of its previous annals had won no such triumph as this. "I desire to protest in the most earnest language I am capable of using against the political morality on which the manœuvres of this year have been based. If you borrow your political ethics from the ethics of the political adventurer, you may depend upon it the whole of your political institutions will crumble beneath your feet." The manœuvre was "a political betrayal which has no parallel in our Parliamentary annals, which strikes at the root of all that mutual confidence which is the very soul of our party government, and on which only the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can be maintained." Other Tories raised protests not more effectual. Mr. Beresford Hope declined to follow "the Asian mystery," but Mr. Disraeli, who had succeeded in debauching the House of Commons as well as his party, turned the laugh against him by alluding to his "Batavian grace"—Mr. Hope

having been of Dutch descent, and somewhat awkward in his gestures.

Lord Derby, the Prime Minister, the "Rupert of Debate," introduced the Bill in the House of Lords, with the statement that it was a "leap in the dark." He had only agreed to this measure, says Bishop Wilberforce, as he would of old have backed a horse at Newmarket. He "hated Disraeli, but believed in him as he would in an unprincipled trainer—he wins—that is all." The main thing was that the Whigs were "dished."

The Hebrew "mystery man," who led the broad-acred squires and lords of ancient England, had indeed (as he boasted afterwards at a Conservative banquet) "educated his party." Even those who revolted from him, afterwards came to adopt his ethics—"the ethics," as Lord Salisbury had styled them, "of the political adventurer." Lord Salisbury himself became one of his aptest pupils, became once again his colleague, became even his political heir, and has worn ever since, with becoming grace, the variegated mantle which fell from his shoulders. Mr. Goldwin Smith thinks that this episode was the beginning of what he considers the downfall of the British Constitution.

The feelings of the Liberal Adullamites who had organised the opposition to Lord Russell's Bill may be more easily imagined than described. For the student of modern political evolution they form an instructive subject for reflection.

On Christmas Eve, 1867, Lord Russell announced his retirement from active politics, and Mr. Gladstone became definitely leader of the Liberal party. However active he may have been in Opposition, Opposition has always been looked upon by Mr. Gladstone as a state of comparative leisure. In the recesses of 1867 and 1868 he found

time to complete and publish the second of his Homeric studies—"Juventus Mundi : Gods and Men of the Heroic Age in Greece."

A few weeks later, on February 25th, 1868, it was announced in both Houses that Lord Derby, through failing health, had resigned the Premiership, and that the Queen had entrusted Mr. Disraeli with the task of forming a new Administration. Thus the "Asian mystery" had reached the highest place, and became Prime Minister of England. Lord Chelmsford on the occasion perpetrated a witticism: "The old Government," he said, "was the Derby; this is the Hoax."



BROKEN RAILINGS AT HYDE PARK CORNER.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRIME MINISTER.

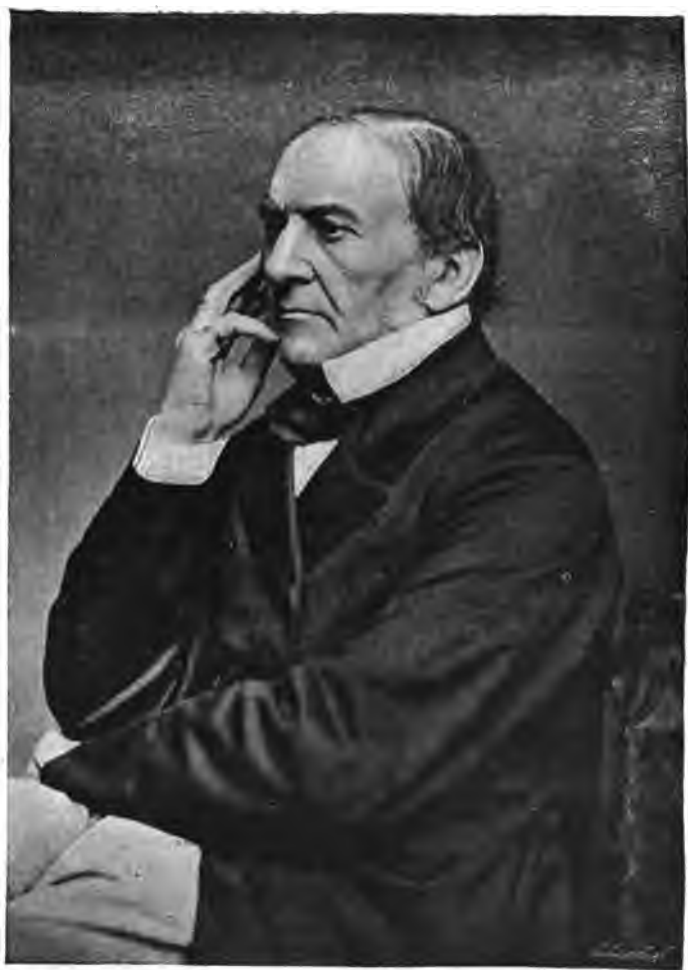
The Rise of the Irish Question—Political Effects of the Famine—Genesis of Fenianism—The Clerkenwell Explosion—Gladstone declares for Disestablishment of Irish Church—Defeats the Government—Dissolution—Tremendous Liberal Victory—Prime Minister at last.

AT this time the Irish question was coming to the front in a manner which rendered it impossible for statesmen to ignore it, and the prominence it then attained in the politics of these kingdoms was one which did not grow less, but which increased, as lowered franchises spread amongst the masses of the Irish people a new political power, and as political leaders arose who taught them how that power might be used.

From this period dates a new departure in the philosophy of English politics as applied to the problem of Ireland. The new road has not been followed continuously or always consistently, there have been halts and turnings-back and divagations, but on the whole the policy of Parliament has moved with an inevitable drift in that direction. With all that tendency Mr. Gladstone's name is pre-eminently associated. He gave it its first impulse, and he gave it its latest. He was the first English statesman to perceive and accept the logic of circumstances, and to behold with a large and sympathetic insight the future whither symptoms then visible in Ireland were pointing. The first step in this departure was his Bill for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and that step he followed up, rarely faltering and never looking back, during the quarter of a century of public life that was still to remain to him, until he had launched the policy of Home Rule and induced the House of Commons to endorse it.

It is necessary to go back a little if the Irish policy which he embraced at this period, and which was presently to be the means of landing him in power, is to be justly understood.

Ignored the Irish question had been by most of the Parliaments of which Mr. Gladstone had experience until this era. While O'Connell lived and agitated it received some attention. The Duke of Wellington counselled that the Catholic emancipation (which O'Connell demanded) should be conceded "to avert civil war." O'Connell's agitation for the repeal of the Act of Union, the Young Irelanders with their literary journals, their poems, and their Girondese oratory, managed to keep Parliament and the outside world interested in the country. But the great famine of 1846 and its concomitant pestilence, which resulted in the Irish population being reduced by nearly two millions in a couple of years, seemed to have drowned the spirit of Ireland in its devastating flood. In the years succeeding that episode, and the abortive insurrection which some of the Young Ireland leaders attempted in 1848, the echoes of those Nationalist ideas which had played so large a part in the days of O'Connell's monster meetings and Thomas Davis's ballads were hardly ever heard. An unhealthy lethargy had fallen on the people; they took little or no interest in the representatives they sent into Parliament; the tenant-farmers, who formed the bulk of the electors, voted as their landlords told them. A feeble Parliamentary party was got together in the interest of the popular side; it contained some honest men, but its active spirits were rogues; and sought nothing but place. One of these, a banker named Sadlier, was made a Junior Lord of the Treasury by Lord Aberdeen, and sat on the Government bench beside Mr. Gladstone. His bank



MR. GLADSTONE IN 1866.

(From a photograph by Samuel A. Walker, 230, Regent Street, W.)

failed, ruining thousands of poor people, and he committed suicide on Hampstead Heath. Another, a lawyer named Keogh, after swearing an oath with dramatic solemnity at a public meeting that he would never take office, was no sooner elected than he accepted the post of Irish Solicitor-General. He was soon raised to the bench as a judge, and at a later period was set to try his former political associates.

The honester Irish members introduced from time to time Bills dealing with the ruinous land system and with the Established Church, which collected an enormous tithe from an impoverished population of a different religion; but these measures were invariably and summarily voted down. Now and then an outbreak of disorder and crime luridly revealed the discontent which lay beneath the surface. Thereupon a Coercion Bill was introduced by the Government. It is calculated that an Irish Coercion Act was passed for every year since the Act of Union. It was the uniform and unfailing mode in which the Imperial Parliament manifested its interest in Ireland.

These experiences at length destroyed amongst Irishmen of Nationalist tendencies whatever may have remained to them of faith in Parliamentary methods for obtaining redress of those grievances which it was one of the broken promises of the treaty of Union to remove. These grievances continued in an aggravated degree since the famine, and the people remembered them. Evicted and forced to emigrate by the hundred thousand, the exiles nourished their sense of wrong in the New World, and as they grew prosperous began to send help to those they left behind. The more determined spirits at home, despairing of constitutional reform, began to dream of revolution. One man in particular, named James Stephens, conceived the

dea of a great secret society, and went through the country enrolling recruits. When the Civil War in America came to an end thousands of Irishmen who had served in the ranks of the contending armies were set free with the experience of military veterans, and great numbers of these intimated to Stephens their readiness to join his society and strike a blow for their country. Such was the genesis of the movement known as Fenianism.

Its history is unnecessary to trace at any length. The insurrection that was planned was, through the vigilance of the Government and through the plentiful supply of informers who were forthcoming from the ranks of the Fenians themselves, effectually thwarted, and it collapsed in a miserable *fiasco*. But the course of the conspiracy was marked by a series of incidents which had the effect of riveting attention and forcing the public mind to consider seriously what the grievances were which could supply fuel to such violent disaffection. There was an attempted Fenian invasion of Canada; an effort was made to capture Chester Castle; in broad daylight a successful rescue was effected of Fenian leaders who were being driven in the police van through the streets of Manchester. In this last affair a policeman was shot, and three Fenians were put on trial for the shooting (which they declared to have been unintentional) and were hanged in front of Manchester Gaol—an event which created in Ireland widespread excitement, and led to the imprisonment of several newspaper editors (amongst them Mr. A. M. Sullivan) for the language in which they denounced it. While another Fenian leader was confined in Clerkenwell Gaol an attempt was made to rescue him by the method of exploding a barrel of gunpowder against the prison wall. By this horrible explosion twelve innocent people were killed and some hundred and twenty injured.

Curious and lamentable as the fact is, these occurrences brought within the range of practical politics the problems of Irish government as no pleading of Irish members before the House of Commons had served to do. Public opinion grew ripe as to the necessity of dealing drastically with the Irish Church Establishment and the Irish Land Question. To Mr. Gladstone belongs the credit of being the first English statesman that had at once the courage, the ability, and the judgment to take by the hand the occasion which the new condition of public opinion presented. We have seen already—in 1865, on Mr. Dillwyn's motion—how his mind was working on the question of the Irish Church. In the Session of 1868, during a debate on the motion of an Irish member (Mr. Maguire) calling attention to the state of Ireland, he startled the House by intimating definitely that he was prepared to see that Church disestablished and other serious Irish reforms begun. A crisis, he said, had been reached in the Irish question. England must at length endeavour to place herself in the right in respect of that long account which Ireland had against her.

If we be prudent men (he said), I hope we shall endeavour, as far as in us lies, to make some provision for a contingent, a doubtful, and probably a dangerous future. If we be chivalrous men, I trust we shall endeavour to wipe away all those stains which the civilised world has for ages seen, or seemed to see, on the shield of England in her treatment of Ireland. If we be compassionate men, I hope we shall now, once for all, listen to the tale of woe which comes from her, and the reality of which, if not its justice, is testified by the continuous migration of her people; that we shall endeavour to

Raze out the written troubles from her brain,
Pluck from her memory the rooted sorrow.

But, above all, if we be just men, we shall go forward in the name of truth and right, bearing this in mind—that when the case is proved, and the hour is come, justice delayed is justice denied.

This, of course, was one of the greatest of all the turning-points in Mr. Gladstone's career—the outset of the long and chequered journey of his Irish policy—and his action has been subjected to an amount of criticism of corresponding interest both as to its importance and as to its variety. One utterance of his in particular in which he explains the effect of the Fenian conspiracy in arousing public opinion has been the focus of one of the most bitter as well as one of the most illustrative phases of the controversy. We may quote that utterance here. He said :

What happened in the case of the Irish Church? That in the year 1865 the whole question of the Irish Church was dead ; nobody cared for it, nobody paid attention to it in England. Circumstances occurred which drew the attention of people to the Irish Church. I said myself it was out of the range of practical politics—that is, politics of the coming election. When it came to this, that a great gaol in the heart of the metropolis was broken open under circumstances which drew the attention of English people to the state of Ireland, and when a Manchester policeman was murdered in the exercise of his duty, at once the whole country became alive to Irish questions, and the question of the Irish Church revived.

This speech was taken up by his opponents as an admission that in consequence of the Clerkenwell explosion, and so forth, Mr. Gladstone himself had changed his mind about the Irish Church. But he put what he meant with perfect lucidity in a subsequent speech. He meant that the matters referred to "had the effect of drawing the attention of the people of this island to the Irish question."

I will give you (he went on) an illustration. Suppose it is Sunday morning, and I have got up and have had my breakfast, and perhaps I am reading a book in which I am interested—let us hope it is a proper and becoming book for the day—I am not thinking of going to church for the moment because I am so interested in the book that I am not conscious of the exact time, when I suddenly hear the church bell. Well, the church bell reminds me, and I put my book

down, put on my hat, and go to church. Would you say the church bell is the cause why I go to church? Not in the least; I go to church because I believe it is my duty to go to church.

That Mr. Gladstone's own views on the necessity for reforming the Irish Church had long ago taken shape is clear to the impartial student; the "Chapter of Autobiography" which he presently issued, detailing those views, puts the question beyond reasonable doubt. Moreover, as to the reproach that he opposed this and other Irish reforms up to the present period, it must be borne in mind that this responsibility, such as it is, does not fall on his shoulders or those of British members alone. It has always been a principle of Mr. Gladstone to be guided in his Irish policy by the opinion of the majority of the Irish representatives. So late as 1865, when Mr. Bright appealed to him (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) and to Mr. Disraeli, on the occasion of the passing of an Irish Coercion Act, to combine in an effort to ascertain the causes of Irish discontent, he was able to quote the Irish members themselves in support of the policy of repression. "He declined," he said, "to recognise the voice of Ireland except as conveyed through the mouths of her legally-elected representatives, and he congratulated the House on the general unanimity with which the Irish members had acquiesced in the Bill." Finally, as to his measures of reform, when they did come, their history after they had passed into law amply proved that they were founded upon justice and dictated by the soundest statesmanship.

The Liberal party, at any rate, took this view about the Irish policy he enunciated in 1868. They rallied round it with enthusiasm as the light to guide them out of the dark region into which the Irish difficulty, or rather the neglect of it, was dragging the Empire.



MR. GLADSTONE IN 1868.

(From a photograph by Samuel A. Walker, 230, Regent Street, W.)

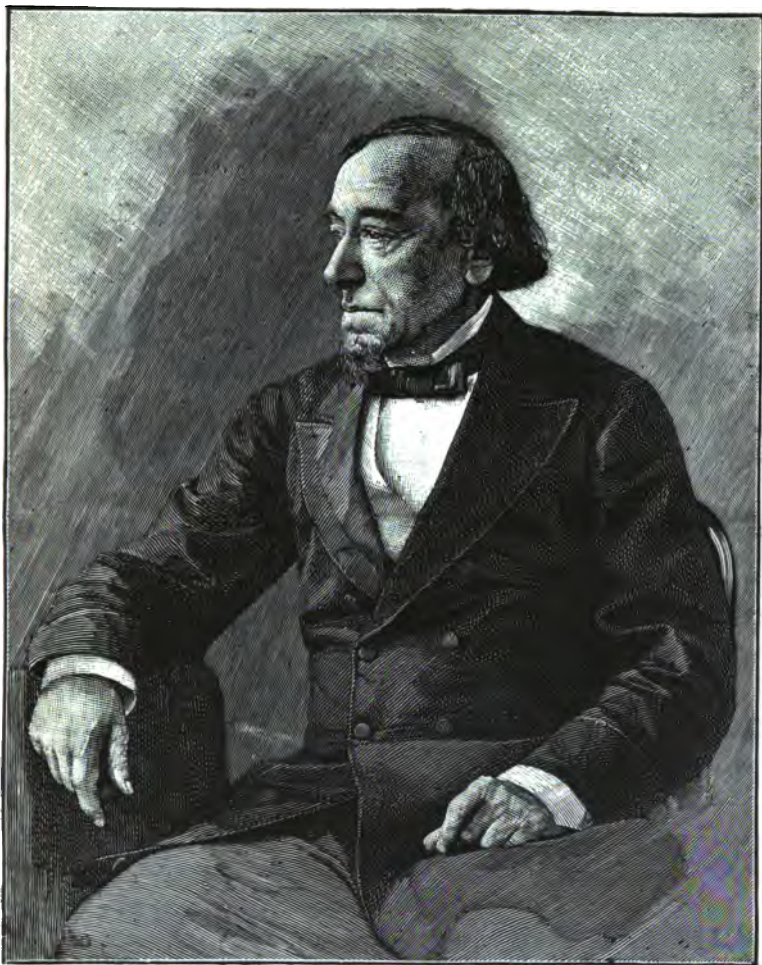
Mr. Gladstone followed up his speech on Mr. Maguire's motion by bringing forward on March 30th a set of nine resolutions outlining the terms on which the disestablishment of the Irish Church might be effected. He had the titles of the various Acts relating to the Church Establishment, the 5th Article of the Act of Union, and the Coronation Oath of the Sovereign solemnly read from the table of the House before he began his speech ; and then he arraigned the Irish Church in one of his most powerful orations, which he thus concluded :—

If I am asked as to my expectations of the issue of this struggle, I begin by frankly avowing that I, for one, would not have entered into it unless I believed that the final hour was about to sound—

Venit summa dies et ineluctabile fatum.

And I hope that the noble lord will forgive me if I say that before Friday last I thought that the thread of the remaining life of the Irish Established Church was short, but that since Friday last, when, at half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, the noble lord stood at that table, I have regarded it as being shorter still. The issue is not in our hands. What we had and have to do is to consider well and deeply before we take the first step in an engagement such as this ; but having entered into the controversy, there and then to acquit ourselves like men, and to use every effort to remove what still remains of the scandals and calamities in the relations which exist between England and Ireland, and to make our best efforts at least to fill up with the cement of human concord the noble fabric of the British Empire.

The Government opposed the resolutions in an amendment moved by Lord Stanley ; but the Government had no case, and, as the event proved, they had no majority. Lord Stanley admitted that not one educated man in a hundred would maintain that the Irish Church was all that it should be, or that there were no scandals in it. Mr. Disraeli declaimed about the glories of the Establishment in a vein of lofty and unctuous zeal which would have become an archbishop, but which only amused a cynical House. When



LORD BEACONSFIELD.

(From a photograph by Hughes & Mullins, Ryde, Isle of Wight.)

it went to a division Lord Stanley's amendment was negatived by a majority of sixty-one. The resolutions themselves were, in substance, carried later by majorities equally emphatic. Lord Derby, in the House of Lords, protested against this mode of procedure by resolution as unconstitutional, to which Mr. Gladstone retorted that he would not take the word of command from the House of Lords.

After these defeats the Government was called on to resign or dissolve Parliament. But Mr. Disraeli preferred to dwell in office a little longer. Parliament was not prorogued until July, and was not dissolved until the following November 11th.

Mr. Gladstone began his electoral campaign immediately after the prorogation, and during the autumn he succeeded in fairly arousing the country. The "No Popery" cry was raised against him; he was even accused of having, at Rome during the preceding winter, secretly become a Roman Catholic—a charge he found it necessary to deny categorically. Lancashire turned out to be a particularly bigoted county at this crisis, and at the election Mr. Gladstone lost his seat. But in anticipation of this result he had been nominated for Greenwich, and for this constituency he was triumphantly returned. As to the Liberal party in general, in the time-honoured phrase they simply "swept the country." When the returns came in they were found to have secured a majority of 115.

Mr. Disraeli did not wait for the assembling of the new Parliament to bow to the inevitable; but, establishing a convenient precedent, he resigned as soon as the result of the elections became known.

On December 4th the Queen sent for Mr. Gladstone and commissioned him to form a Ministry. By the 9th

the new Government was complete, Mr. Bright, the Radical tribune, whose eloquence had contributed so much to the victory in the country, being included in it as President of the Board of Trade. On the 10th of December the Ministers met the new Parliament. Thus at last, after thirty-five years of industrious public life, was Mr. Gladstone at the summit of power—Prime Minister and master of a superb Parliamentary majority.

An interesting personal glimpse of him as he was to the circle of his private friends in this hour of triumph we get from the never-failing journal of Bishop Wilberforce. The day after Parliament met, the new Premier and his wife paid a visit to Lord and Lady Salisbury at Hatfield. Bishop Wilberforce was there, and thus writes: "Gladstone as ever, great, earnest and honest; as unlike the tricky Disraeli as possible. He is so delightfully true and the same; just as full of interest in every good thing of every kind."

When people talk of Gladstone going mad, they do not take into account the wonderful elasticity of his mind and the variety of his interests. Now, this morning (I am writing in the train on my way to London), after breakfast, he and Salisbury, and I and Cardwell, had a walk round this beautiful park, and he was just as much interested in the size of the oaks, their probable age, etc., as if no care of State ever pressed upon him. This is his safeguard, joined to entire rectitude of purpose and clearness of view. He is now writing opposite to me in the railway carriage on his way to Windsor Castle.

I never saw him pleasanter, calmer, or more ready to enter freely into everything. . . . He remarked to me on the great power of charming and pleasant host-ing possessed by Salisbury. I think that he will hold his own. I do not believe in the excitement and temper, etc., which people talk about. He is far more in earnest than most people, and therefore they revenge themselves by saying that he loses his temper.

CHAPTER IX.

"THE GOLDEN AGE OF LIBERALISM."

The First Gladstone Administration—A Tide of Liberal Reforms—Dis-establishment of the Irish Church—Irish Land Act of 1870—Abolition of Purchase in the Army—Education and Ballot Acts—*Alabama* Claims—Arbitration—Reaction—Decline of Government's Popularity—Gladstone goes to Blackheath—Unexpected Resolve to Dissolve Parliament—Liberals beaten at Polls—Mr. Gladstone resigns Leadership of Liberal Party, and withdraws from Public Life—Literary Activity in Retirement.

THE period which followed the election of 1868—the period of the Gladstone Administration of 1868-74—has been called "the golden age of Liberalism." It was certainly a period of great reforms. The first, the most heroic, and probably—taking all the results into account—the most completely successful of these, was the disestablishment of the Irish Church.

Though Mr. Gladstone had a great majority at his back, the difficulties which confronted him were immense. In Ireland the wildest protests emanated from the friends of the Establishment. The "loyal minority" declared that their loyalty would come to an end if the measure were passed. One synod, speaking with a large assumption, even for a synod, of inspired knowledge, denounced it as "highly offensive to the Almighty God." The Orangemen threatened to rise in insurrection. A martial clergyman proposed to "kick the Queen's crown into the Boyne" if she assented to such a Bill. Another announced his intention of fighting with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other. Mr. Johnston, of Ballykilbeg, who afterwards became a mild but moody M.P., spoke of lining with Orange rifles the ditches north of the Boyne. Mr. David Plunkett, Q.C.,

M.P., who lived to become an urbane First Commissioner of Works in a Tory Administration, though no Orangeman, was ready to resort to physical force in defence of the menaced Church, and appealed to brother Protestants in England, Scotland, and Wales to "stand by us in this last awful hour of our fortunes." These appeals and these threats of civil war, absurd as they proved to be in reality, were not without producing some effect in Great Britain, and it was amid a din of warnings, of misgiving counsels and of hostile cries, that Mr. Gladstone proceeded to carry out the mandate of the nation which he had received at the polls.

On the 1st of March, 1869, he introduced his Disestablishment Bill. His speech was one of the greatest marvels amongst his oratorical achievements. His chief opponent declared that, though it lasted three hours, it did not contain a redundant word. The scheme which it unfolded—a scheme which withdrew the temporal establishment of a Church in such a manner that the Church was benefited, not injured, and which lifted from the backs of an oppressed people an intolerable burden—was a triumph of creative genius. Leaving aside his Budgets, which stand in a different category, it seems to us there is no room to doubt that in his record of constructive legislation this measure for the disestablishment of the Irish Church is Mr. Gladstone's most perfect masterpiece. Here is the noble peroration with which the great speech of this occasion was brought to a close :—

I do not know in what country so great a change, so great a transition, has been proposed for the ministers of a religious communion who have enjoyed for many ages the preferred position of an Established Church. I can well understand that to many in the Irish Establishment such a change appears to be nothing less than ruin and destruction ; from the height on which they now stand the future is to them an

abyss, and their fears recall the words used in *King Lear*, when Edgar endeavours to persuade Glo'ster that he has fallen over the cliffs of Dover, and says :

Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fallen :
Thy life's a miracle !

And yet but a little while after the old man is relieved from his delusion, and finds he has not fallen at all. So I trust that when, instead of the fictitious and adventitious aid on which we have too long taught the Irish Establishment to lean, it should come to place its trust in its own resources, in its own great mission, in all that it can draw from the energy of its ministers and its members, and the high hopes and promises of the Gospel that it teaches, it will find that it has entered upon a new era of existence—an era bright with hope and potent for good. At any rate, I think the day has certainly come when an end is finally to be put to that union, not between the Church and religious association, but between the Establishment and the State, which was commenced under circumstances little auspicious, and has endured to be a source of unhappiness to Ireland and of discredit and scandal to England. There is more to say. This measure is in every sense a great measure—great in its principles, great in the multitude of its dry, technical, but interesting detail, and great as a testing measure ; for it will show for one and all of us of what metal we are made. Upon us all it brings a great responsibility—great and foremost upon those who occupy this bench. We are especially chargeable—nay, deeply guilty—if we have either dishonestly, as some think, or even prematurely or unwisely, challenged so gigantic an issue. I know well the punishments that follow rashness in public affairs, and that ought to fall upon those men, those Phaetons of politics, who, with hands unequal to the task, attempt to guide the chariot of the sun. But the responsibility, though heavy, does not exclusively press upon us ; it presses upon every man who has to take part in the discussion and decision upon this Bill. Every man approaches the discussion under the most solemn obligations to raise the level of his vision and expand its scope in proportion with the greatness of the matter in hand. The working of our constitutional government itself is upon its trial, for I do not believe there ever was a time when the wheels of legislative machinery were set in motion, under conditions of peace and order and constitutional regularity, to deal with a question greater or more profound. And more especially, sir, is the credit and fame of this great assembly involved ; this assembly which has inherited through many ages the accumulated honours of brilliant

triumphs, of peaceful but courageous legislation, is now called upon to address itself to a task which would, indeed, have demanded all the best energies of the very best among your fathers and your ancestors. I believe it will prove to be worthy of the task. Should it fail, even the fame of the House of Commons will suffer disparagement; should it succeed, even that fame, I venture to say, will receive no small, no insensible addition. I must not ask gentlemen opposite to concur in this view, emboldened as I am by the kindness they have shown me in listening with patience to a statement which could not have been other than tedious; but I pray them to bear with me for a moment while, for myself and my colleagues, I say we are sanguine of the issue. We believe, and for my part I am deeply convinced, that when the final consummation shall arrive, and when the words are spoken that shall give the force of law to the work embodied in this measure—the work of peace and justice—those words will be echoed upon every shore where the name of Ireland or the name of Great Britain has been heard, and the answer to them will come back in the approving verdict of civilised mankind.

When Mr. Disraeli came to oppose this measure, his speech was referred to by the *Times* as “flimsiness relieved by spangles—the definition of a columbine’s skirt.” After an interesting debate, in which Mr. Bright delivered one of the most famous of his speeches, the second reading was carried by a majority of 118. The Bill went through Committee prosperously, and had its third reading voted by a majority of 118.

The House of Lords, much as it disliked the measure—and all the bishops but one were against it—could not resist the popular will in the face of a manifestation of it so unequivocal. Efforts were made to amend the Bill in Committee, but the House of Commons disagreed with the chief amendments. For a moment it looked as if there might be a deadlock between the two Houses. But the Lords eventually yielded, Mr. Gladstone refusing to budge, and passed the Bill by a majority of seven. In inducing the Upper House to adopt this prudent course, Archbishop Tait’s memoirs

show that the good offices of the Queen played no inconsiderable part.

In the following session—on February 15th, 1870—Mr. Gladstone introduced his Irish Land Bill. This measure sought to give effect to the principles of land legislation which had years before been indicated by the Devon Commission, and which Irish members had brought before the House again and again in some dozens of Bills, but which Parliament had persistently refused to consider. The position of the Irish occupier under the existing land system Mr. Gladstone declared was no better than it had been before the repeal of the Penal Laws. In certain counties of Ulster there was a traditional custom which secured to the tenant fixity of tenure so long as he paid his rent, and a property or tenant-right in his holding in virtue of the improvements which he and his predecessors in title had effected thereon—a tenant-right which he could sell. Throughout the rest of Ireland the tenants were in the main tenants-at-will, their property and themselves at the mercy of the landlords—an evil condition which reacted upon both tenants and landlords, and produced results of barbarism and cruelty not matched in any country pretending to be civilised. Roughly speaking, Mr. Gladstone's Bill legalised the Ulster custom, and sought to extend its benefits to the rest of Ireland. So far as its intention went the Bill was admirable, and it had the great positive result of embodying in the law a principle of the utmost value, which has been the cardinal principle of all subsequent Irish land legislation—namely, the recognition of the tenant's property in his improvements. But in many respects it was inadequate, and it did not properly safeguard the principles it sought to enact. There was room for wholesale evasion by the landlords of its intention. Sir John Gray



THE FOURTEENTH LORD DERBY.

and other Irish members pointed out this at the time, but their warnings were not heeded, and so strongly did they feel that they divided against the Bill—11 members voting against 442, for both sides of the House joined in supporting the second reading. This disproportionate minority was laughed at as a ludicrous exhibition of obstinacy, but, as subsequent history showed, it would have been better had it been treated less contemptuously.

The Land Bill was read a third time in the Lords on June 2nd, and on August 1st it passed into law. But before it did, on the theory of the "judicious mixture," which Mr. Gladstone afterwards satirised, a Coercion Bill had been rapidly pushed through all its stages by the Irish Chief Secretary. Before the year closed, the mixture was still further perfected by the release, on condition of their going into exile, of the Fenian prisoners, on whose behalf a strong amnesty agitation had been going on in Ireland for some time previously.

In the same session another important Liberal measure, Mr. Forster's Education Bill, was introduced by the Government, and ultimately became law.

War was declared this year between France and Prussia, and Mr. Gladstone did his country the service, in spite of the efforts and devices of Prince Bismarck and the pressure of thoughtless and unscrupulous people at home, of maintaining her throughout that lamentable conflict in an attitude of strict neutrality.

In the following sessions the tide of Liberal reform continued on its course. A measure was introduced abolishing purchase in the Army; and on this question Mr. Gladstone had his third notable conflict with the Lords. The Lords threw out the Bill. The imperious Premier, having found that purchase in the Army existed

only by royal sanction, advised the Queen to issue a Royal Warrant cancelling the regulation. By a single act of executive authority he carried out a reform to which Parliament had, through one of its branches, refused its assent. This was a high-handed, not to say autocratic step, and it afforded a striking revelation of the capacities in boldness and resolution of Mr. Gladstone's character. It was denounced as Cæsarism and Cromwellism in some quarters ; in others as an unconstitutional invocation of the royal prerogative.

One of the proudest and most beneficent of Mr. Gladstone's achievements in the remainder of this Parliament was his reference of the question of the *Alabama* claims to arbitration. The *Alabama* was a cruiser which had been built in an English yard, partially manned by an English crew, and sent to sea, against the protests of the United States Government, to take part as a commerce-destroyer in the Civil War on the side of the Confederate States. There were other cruisers which had been despatched from England under more or less similar circumstances. The claims which the American Government made at Downing Street in respect of these vessels had been dragging on, and were threatening to lead to a rupture between Great Britain and the United States. From that calamity Mr. Gladstone saved two great kindred nations by referring the question to arbitration, and insisting on his country abiding by the award of that arbitration, when England was condemned thereby to pay an indemnity of £3,229,166. But this great and statesmanlike proceeding was not liked by the warlike party at home, and in the hands of an unscrupulous Opposition it was so manipulated that it contributed considerably to the wane of his popularity which Mr. Gladstone was soon to experience.

Another of the reforms of this Parliament was the establishment of vote by ballot.

A time came at length when the country seemed to grow tired of reforms, and to grow tired, not so much of Mr. Gladstone, as of several of the colleagues by whom he was surrounded, and for whose shortcomings he had to bear the responsibility. The symptoms of natural reaction began, in fact, to appear. Mr. Gladstone himself, with characteristic courage, resolved to brave the adverse wind when it arose. He went down amongst his constituents, and, bare-headed on Blackheath, he addressed a great hostile meeting, whose groans and hisses his fearless and persuasive eloquence ended by transforming into enthusiastic cheers. But the popularity of the Government continued to decline, and the Opposition was adroitly led. Mr. Disraeli seized the psychological moment to launch a document in which he declared that for nearly five years the existing Ministers "had harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country." "All this," he said, "they call a policy, and seem quite proud of it ; but the country has, I think, made up its mind to close this career of plundering and blundering."

The Government had actually sustained one defeat in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone had brought forward in March, 1873, a Bill for University Education in Ireland. It was the third phase of his assault on what he called the deadly "upas tree" of Irish misgovernment which he had determined to cut down. The second reading of the measure was defeated by a majority of three. Mr. Gladstone resigned.* But Mr. Disraeli declined

* The following extract from Mr. Forster's diary relates to this occasion : — "*March 13th.*—Cabinet again at twelve. Decided to resign. . . .

to form a Government, and the Liberal leader was obliged to resume office. Mr. Disraeli likened the Treasury bench to a row of extinct volcanoes.

Weariness and disgust at last took possession of the veteran, and inspired him to a characteristic step. On January 23rd, 1874, he startled the world, and his supporters no less than his foes, by issuing an address to the electors of Greenwich announcing that the existing Parliament would be dissolved and a new one summoned to meet without delay. He had determined to consult the country itself upon the aspect of public affairs. If he were returned to power he would repeal the income tax. This address was issued without even consultation with his colleagues. It was a veritable *coup d'état*.

At the general election which followed the Liberal party were badly beaten, the Tories being returned with a majority of forty-six. Mr. Gladstone resigned without waiting for the meeting of Parliament. And not only did he resign the Premiership, but he resolved to resign the leadership of the Liberal party, and retire from public life.

On March 12th he wrote as follows to Lord Granville as the person next in rank to himself in the hierarchy of the party :—

For a variety of reasons personal to myself I could not contemplate any unlimited extension of active political service ; and I am anxious that it should be clearly understood by those friends with whom I have acted in the direction of affairs that at my age I must reserve my entire freedom to divest myself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time. The need of rest will prevent me from giving

Gladstone made us quite a touching little speech. He began playfully. This was the last of some 150 Cabinets or so, and he wished to say to his colleagues with what 'profound gratitude'— And here he completely broke down and could say nothing, except that he could not enter on the details. . . . Tears came to my eyes, and we were all touched."

more than occasional attendance in the House of Commons during the present Session.

I should be desirous, shortly before the commencement of the Session of 1875, to consider whether there would be advantage in my placing my services for a time at the disposal of the Liberal party, or whether I should then claim exemption from the duties I have hitherto discharged. If, however, there should be reasonable ground for believing that, instead of the course which I have sketched, it would be preferable, in the view of the party generally, for me to assume at once the place of an independent member, I should willingly adopt the latter alternative. But I shall retain all that desire I have hitherto felt for the welfare of the party, and if the gentlemen composing it should think fit either to choose a leader or make provision *ad interim*, with a view to the convenience of the present year, the person designated would, of course, command from me any assistance which he might find occasion to seek, and which it might be in my power to render.

It is needless to say that this announcement produced consternation in the ranks of his party. They hoped against hope that it was not final, but on January 13th, 1875, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville again, reiterating his determination after having reviewed, as he said, the whole question :—

The result has been (he wrote) that I see no public advantage in my continuing to act as the leader of the Liberal party; and that, at the age of sixty-five, and after forty-two years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the present opportunity. This retirement is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life.

The Liberal party thereupon accepted his resignation, and elected Lord Hartington for its leader in his stead. The retired veteran occupied the early portion of the leisure of his retreat by plunging into his favourite pastime—theological controversy. He wrote papers on “Ritualism and the Church of England,” and two pamphlets on “Vaticanism and the Vatican Decrees,” in which he attacked with intense bitterness the Roman Catholic Church and its recently



LORD HARTINGTON (AFTERWARDS THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE).
(From a photograph by Russell & Sons.)

promulgated doctrine of Papal Infallibility. These latter called forth a great number of replies, amongst them one from Cardinal Newman. Mr. Gladstone's enemies said he delivered himself of these attacks in order to free himself from the suspicion of being at heart a dutiful son of the Pope; others accounted for their bitterness by saying he was angry with the Irish Roman Catholic bishops for their reception of his University scheme. There may have been some share of these feelings amongst his motives; but they are not necessary to explain the fervid zeal in the controversy of one whose favourite pre-occupation has been religious polemic, and who suddenly found himself, while still in possession of all his extraordinary energies, intellectual and physical, with superabundant leisure on his hands.



CARDINAL NEWMAN.

(From a photograph by H. J. Whitlock, Birmingham.)

CHAPTER X.

THE MIDLOTHIAN CAMPAIGN.

A Brief Retirement—Into the Strife again—The Bulgarian Atrocities
—A Great Agitation—The Jingo Era—An Object of Obloquy
—The Nation aroused—A Visit to Ireland—General Election—
The Midlothian Campaign—Prime Minister once more.

MR. GLADSTONE'S retirement from political affairs was not destined to be of long duration. Within two years from his second definitive announcement that his public life had closed he was the central figure of a great political storm—inspiring, inciting, and leading one of the most energetic and effective agitations that English politics have ever witnessed.

In 1876 two of the Christian provinces which groaned under Turkish misrule in the Balkans—namely, Herzegovina and Bulgaria—had risen in rebellion. In the former province the rebellion was partially successful, but in Bulgaria it was suppressed with more than Turkish violence. The Governments of Austria, Russia, and Germany desired to obtain redress for the Christian populations; they had already presented a joint Note to the Porte recommending reforms, and in May their representatives, including the Czar himself, met in conference at Berlin and drew up a Memorandum dealing with the Eastern Question generally. Mr. Disraeli announced in Parliament that the English Government dissented from that Memorandum, and two days later the country was startled by the news that the British fleet had been ordered to Besika Bay. This step was an announcement to the world that England was prepared to sustain the position of Turkey in relation to the Balkan States, and to oppose the policy recommended by Russia and the other

Christian Powers even to the extent of going to war. It was the beginning of the Disraelian era of Russophobia, Imperialism, and Jingoism.

At this moment, however, it fortunately happened that the public opinion of England, and indeed of Europe, was shocked by a series of revelations which the *Daily News* published from its special correspondent, Mr. MacGahan, respecting the manner in which the insurrection in Bulgaria had been suppressed. The Bazi-Bazouk soldiery had, according to this witness, perpetrated massacres and other atrocities upon the Bulgarian Christians which recalled the darkest annals of barbarism. From the publication of these letters of Mr. MacGahan may be dated that generous revulsion of feeling in England which, when used and directed by a great leader, eventually thwarted Mr. Disraeli's designs, saved England from what would have been a disgraceful war, and allowed independence and happiness to be brought to the Christian populations of the Balkans. From the first the revelations created a sensation which embarrassed the Government. Mr. Disraeli sought to dismiss them with cynical jests, but in Parliament and in the press he was assailed on the subject, and at length he had to send out a Commissioner to investigate the facts alleged. This Commissioner, Mr. Baring, presented his Report in August. It corroborated Mr. MacGahan's statements in every particular, and added other horrible details on its own account.

Mr. Gladstone, in his retirement at Hawarden, could no longer remain still. Here was a cause and an opportunity which appealed to everything that was characteristic in his temperament: an oppressed people struggling against a hideous tyranny; the oppressed, Christians—the oppressor, the great infidel despotism of Europe; an English Govern-

ment threatening to take the side of infidelity and tyranny ; English public opinion awake and seething with indignation against the threatened crime, and only awaiting a leader bold and great enough to give its sentiments voice and put them in effective operation. It was a "call to duty" not to be resisted. Immediately after the appearance of Mr. Baring's Report, Mr. Gladstone published a pamphlet entitled "*Bulgarian Horrors, and the Question of the East,*" which was the commencement of a marvellous exhibition of his activity and genius. The keynote of that pamphlet is struck in the following passage :

Let us insist that our Government, which has been working in one direction, shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other states of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner—namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas—one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned. . . . If it be allowable that the executive power of Turkey should renew at this great crisis, by permission or authority of Europe, the charter of its existence in Bulgaria, then there is not on record since the beginning of political society a protest that man has lodged against intolerable misgovernment, or a stroke he has dealt at loathsome tyranny, that ought not henceforward to be branded as a crime.

This is the sort of language which stirs a people ; which they read aloud to each other in their workshops, their clubs, their houses ; which fills them with a hot and pulsing determination as if a rich wine had warmed their blood. Mr. Gladstone followed up the eloquence of his pamphlet by that of a series of speeches—delivered to great meetings and to the House of Commons—with which for four years he sought, and successfully sought, as his own phrase put it,

"night and day to counterwork the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield." His action prevented England's joining in the Russo-Turkish War on the wrong side, and towards the conclusion of that conflict, when the music-halls of London were resounding with the wretched braggart chorus—

We don't want to fight,
But, by Jingo, if we do, etc.,

which so fitly epitomised, and gave a name to, the Beaconsfieldian policy—the sentiment which he had educated proved capable of steadying the country.*

Lord Beaconsfield's general purpose had been the exploitation of a tawdry "Imperialism," as it was nicknamed, by means of an appeal to the worst of national passions and weaknesses, to national vain-glory, cupidity and military ambition, to the desire to acquire territory abroad and to impose a swaggering dominion on the necks of conquered peoples. It is always easy to arouse such passions, and

* An amusing instance of the sort of vituperation of which he became the object, even in Turkey, during this campaign, was quoted by himself in a lecture at Hawarden in 1877. "An article," he said, "appeared in one of the Turkish newspapers, addressed, 'The man Gladstone, projector of mischief'; and the latter part of the article stated that I was the servant of a pig-dealer in my youth; that my Bulgarian name was Grosaden; that I changed it to Gladstone; that I was destitute of all feelings of humanity, and lived only to love gold. 'Gladstone's nickname, "Eyes of Gold,"' it continued, 'is derived from his covetousness for gold. According to the information vouchsafed by persons who know him, he is middle-sized, has a yellow complexion, wears a half-beard, and is thick-haired. Only his forehead is open, it being a token of his mischievous turn of mind. Owing to this same reason the fore-side of his head is bald, to the extent that those who look at him from afar take him to be scalped. His nose is prominent and aquiline, his mouth is very ugly, like the words which proceed from it, and when he shuts it, his two fore-teeth fall one decimetre beyond the upper lip. Such is his extraordinary shape.' Nothing," added Mr. Gladstone with eager supererogation, "could be more absurd than such a statement."



MR. GLADSTONE IN 1880.

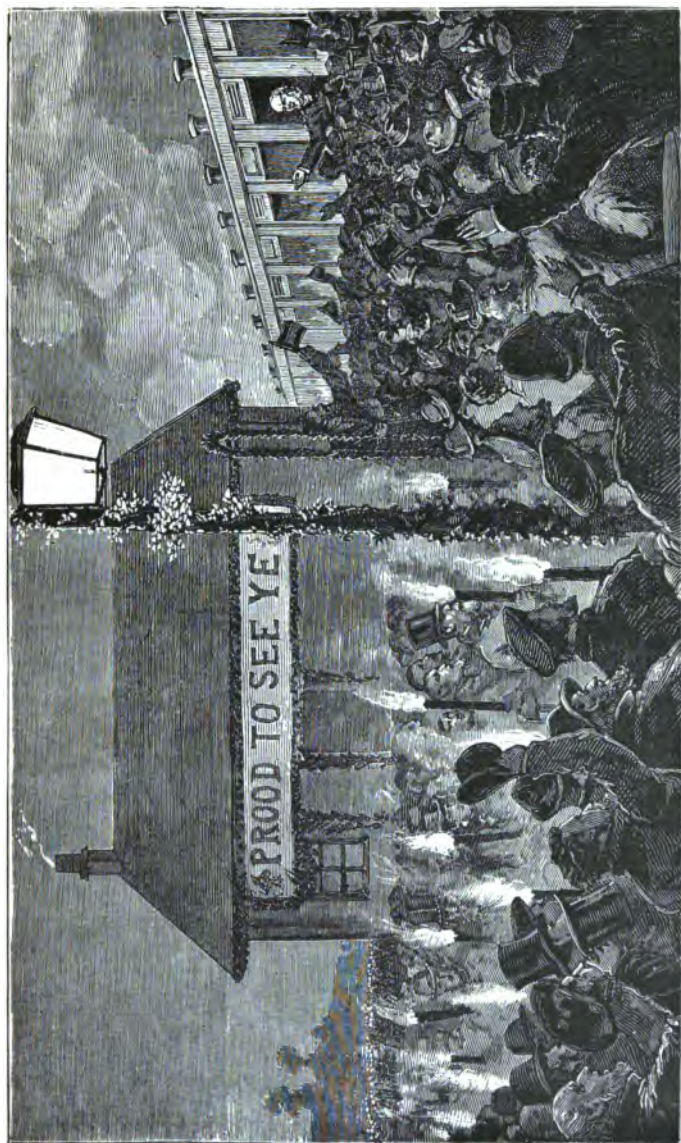
(From a photograph by Samuel A. Walker, 230, Regent Street, W.)

Lord Beaconsfield undoubtedly did after a time succeed in generating by this means a considerable amount of excited sentiment in his support—a fact which illustrates the magnitude of the achievement of keeping alive and powerful the better feelings of the nation and the courage required to pursue that task. At one time it was not safe for Mr. Gladstone to appear in the streets of London. “I have walked with my wife to my own house,” he said in the House of Commons on July 30, 1878, “owing my protection to the police.”*

In the House of Commons he was hardly safer than in the streets. The hatred of him generated amongst the Conservative party went to such a pitch that he was jeered at and interrupted whenever he spoke. Once he was even mobbed by his fellow members. Mr. Lucy in his “*Diary of Two Parliaments*” has described the scene, and it would, indeed, as he remarks, have been a striking subject for the historical painter :—

Scene, division lobby of the House of Commons ; date, 12th April, 1878 ; time, 9.20 p.m. Gladstone is walking along the lobby, having recorded his vote against a hasty proposal to conduct the business of Parliament in secret. The Conservative majority in the other lobby observe him through the glass door and suddenly set up a yell of execration which could scarcely be more violent if the murderer of Lord Leitrim, flying for sanctuary to Westminster, were discovered skulking in the lobby. The crowd increases till it reaches the proportions of forty or fifty English gentlemen, all well educated, many of good birth who, with hand held to mouth to make the sound shriller, howl and

* On one occasion his windows were broken by a mob. Shortly afterwards Mr. Gladstone received a badly-written letter from a working-man, enclosing £3 10s., the sum at which the papers had assessed the damage. The writer said that he and his family had felt so ashamed of the great statesman's windows having been broken by any calling themselves working men, that they had scraped together the sum to pay for the damage.



THE MIDLOTHIAN CAMPAIGN : RETURNING FROM WEST CALDER.

groan, while some even shake their fists. Gladstone, startled at the cry, looks up and sees the crowd. He pauses a moment, and then, advancing close up to the glass door, calmly surveys the yelling mob. On the one side the slight figure drawn to its full height, and the pale, stern face steadfastly turned towards the crowd. On the other the jeering, mocking, gesticulating mob. Between them the glass door and the infinite space that separates a statesman from the partisan.

Yet the sentiment he had aroused saved the country from the largest of the follies by which it was threatened; and if it failed to stop the lesser adventures in which Lord Beaconsfield found an outlet for the passions he had unloosed—an annexation of Cyprus, an interference in Egypt, an annexation of the Transvaal, a Zulu war which Mr. Gladstone denounced as "one of the most monstrous and indefensible in our history," an Afghan war which he described as a national crime—it nevertheless was so true an interpretation of the best, the deliberate judgment of the nation, that it sufficed eventually to bring the Liberal party back to power.

In the midst of this agitation Mr. Gladstone found opportunity in November, 1877, to fulfil his long-cherished wish of visiting Ireland. He enjoyed the trip immensely. He was warmly received by the people; in Dublin he was feted and presented with the freedom of the city.[†]

When Parliament was dissolved in 1880 the general

* "A Diary of Two Parliaments: The Disraeli Parliament."

† "I could not describe the tumult almost of thought and emotion that a visit to Ireland brought into the mind," he said in his speech in Dublin, on that occasion. "I saw from its antiquities, which formerly I knew the existence of only in the abstract, how remarkable was the position which Ireland occupied in those days; and I may say in those centuries, when she had almost a monopoly of learning and piety, and when she alone held up the truths of civilisation, of true Christian civilisation, in Northern and Western Europe. They made a very deep impression on me, and they enabled me the better to understand the intense feeling with which the Irishman loves his country."



MR. W. E. FORSTER.
(From a photograph by Russell & Sons.)

election was practically fought upon the question of foreign policy—upon those questions which the Liberal orator had been agitating during the previous four years. Mr. Gladstone stood for Midlothian, the constituency which he was to represent for the remainder of his political life, and inaugurated on the occasion a new method of electioneering. Addressing meetings from the windows of railway carriages at wayside stations as he travelled to the constituency and through it, so that not a moment nor an opportunity might be wasted, he fought with such a tireless and inexhaustible energy, and such contagious enthusiasm, that this Midlothian campaign riveted the attention of the entire country, and became the central point and model for imitation throughout the whole field of the Liberal attack. The result was a splendid victory. Mr. Gladstone not only carried all before him in Midlothian, but the Liberal party again “swept the country,” the close of the election leaving them with an overwhelming majority.

Lord Beaconsfield followed the precedent he had himself set in 1868, and resigned before meeting Parliament. As Lord Hartington was at the time titular leader of the Liberal party, Mr. Gladstone being still technically in retirement, the Queen sent for the former; but Mr. Gladstone was, under the circumstances, the only possible Prime Minister, as both Lord Hartington and Lord Granville assured Her Majesty, and to him eventually the royal summons came. For the second time he found himself at the summit of power.

CHAPTER XI.

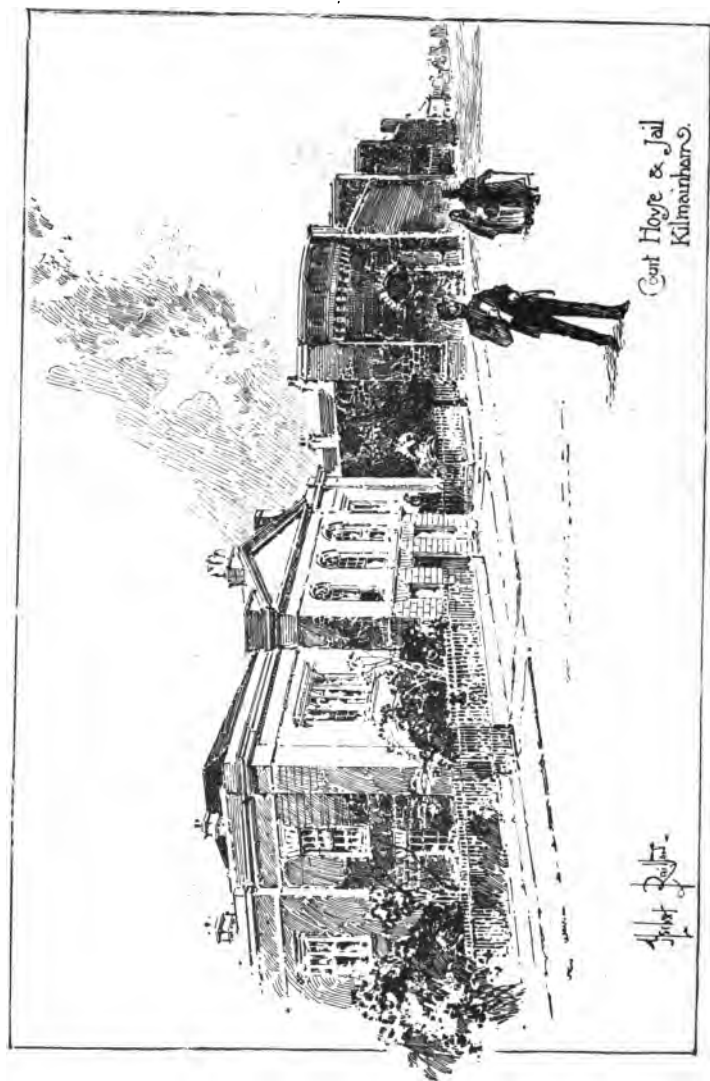
IRELAND AND EGYPT.

The Rise of Mr. Parnell—The Land League—Mr. Forster's Compensation for Disturbance Bill thrown out by the Lords—The Coercion Act of 1881—Suspension of the Irish Members—Mr. Gladstone's Land Bill of 1881—Mr. Parnell's Arrest—Mr. Forster's *Régime*—The Egyptian Question.

THE Parliament of 1880-1885 was to witness another and perhaps the most striking of all the illustrations of the danger of a neglected Irish question. On this sunken rock a splendid majority was to go to pieces, and a great party was to experience the demoralisation that comes of an abandonment of its vital principles.

During the Beaconsfield Administration Ireland had been quite overlooked; it seemed to have been forgotten by all parties in the general excitement over the Eastern question. But during these years two things happened in Ireland whose combined influence was eventually to rivet every eye on that country and to keep it the chief pre-occupation of English parties ever since. One of these was the acquisition by the Irish people of an active consciousness of their political power under the conditions of the Constitution; the other was the arrival of another famine which was to put both the land laws and the system of Irish government to a disastrous test.

Furthermore, a leader of extraordinary ability—one who was destined to fill as large a place in history as O'Connell—had arisen for the Irish people in the person of Mr. Parnell. Under his inspiration the Land League—a powerful trade union of the tenant farmers, which Mr.



KILMAINHAM.

(From a photograph by W. Lawrence, Dublin.)

Michael Davitt, a released Fenian prisoner, had already been attempting to promote—was established. In Parlia-



MR. PARNELL.

ment Mr. Parnell, with his colleague, Mr. Biggar, sought to force attention to the Irish question by pursuing a policy of obstruction; in Ireland he urged the tenant farmers, menaced by famine and eviction, to join the Land League and “keep a firm grip of their holdings.” After

the general election Mr. Parnell found himself surrounded by a party of sixty-eight parliamentary followers. Many of these gentlemen, however, were but Home Rulers nominally. For fighting purposes the Irish leader throughout this Parliament was never able to count on a phalanx of much more than thirty supporters—a fact which is important to bear in mind in considering subsequent developments of Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy.

The significance of these events seems to have escaped all parties in England until some time after the general election. Mr. Gladstone, in a speech in 1884, said: "I frankly admit that I had had much upon my hands connected with the doings of that (the Beaconsfield) Government in every quarter of the world, and I did not know—no one knew—the severity of the crisis that was already swelling upon the horizon, and that shortly after rushed upon us like a flood." Indeed, it is clear that when he had completed his Irish legislation of 1869-70—the Disestablishment of the Church and the Land Bill—the Liberal leader had persuaded himself that he had disposed of the Irish question once for all. When Mr. Isaac Butt and other members who contended that these measures were inadequate to settle that question, started the Home Rule movement in 1870, Mr. Gladstone—in a speech in 1871, on receiving the freedom of Aberdeen—spoke of the political delusions to which the Irish people were periodically subject, and declared that all their grievances had now been removed except that which referred to higher education. As to Home Rule itself, he said on this occasion that if Ireland was entitled to it, Wales and Scotland were better entitled. "Can any sensible man," he asked, "can any rational man, suppose that at this time of day, in this condition of the world, we are going to disintegrate the

THE COMPENSATION FOR DISTURBANCE BILL. 135.

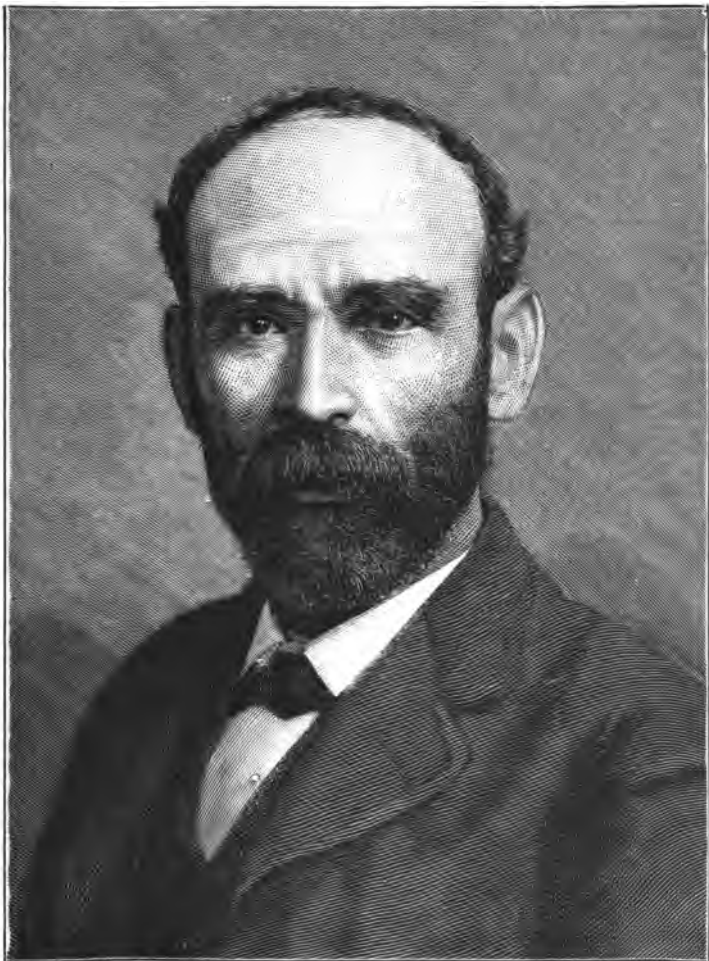
great capital institutions of this country for the purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the sight of all mankind, and crippling any power we possess for bestowing benefits, through legislation, on the country to which we belong?"

There was no mention of Irish legislation in the Queen's Speech when the new Parliament assembled in 1880. But Mr. Parnell warned the House of the gravity of the situation. He pointed out that the sudden depression brought into prominence the defects which still remained in the land system, that the landlords were evading the Act of 1870, and that, while the charitable were endeavouring to save their tenants by relief funds, they were availing themselves of the distress to carry out wholesale evictions. He declared that, unless this work were stopped, the consequences to social order would be deplorable. Finally, the Irish party brought in a Suspension of Evictions Bill, and the Government at length realised that something must be done. On the second reading of that Bill, Mr. Gladstone announced that the Government would deal with the subject themselves; and shortly afterwards Mr. Forster, who was Chief Secretary for Ireland in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, introduced his Compensation for Disturbance Bill, which was the Suspension of Evictions Bill in another form. This measure was passed through the House of Commons with large majorities; but when it went to the House of Lords it was incontinently rejected. Few acts of that Assembly have had more grievous consequences. The Government did not press the measure after its rejection, did not send it up to the Lords a second time or threaten dissolution, and the Irish tenants were left to their own resources in the conflict with the evicting landlords, the Government at first hoping to remain neutral between them. If injustice and tyranny were committed by the landlords, said Mr. Forster, in

August, 1880, "he did not think the House would expect him to remain the instrument of that injustice."

But the state of Ireland at the moment was too critical to be left alone, and perhaps too bewildering for a judgment not quite prepared for the problems it presented. The rejection of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill was, to the peasantry whom it had been intended to protect, a message of despair, and it was followed by the usual symptom of despair in Ireland—an outbreak of agrarian crime. On the one hand over 17,000 persons were evicted ; on the other there was a dreadful crop of murders and outrages. The Land League sought to do what Parliament did not ; but in doing so it came in contact with the law. Moreover, the revolution—for revolution it seemed to be—grew too formidable for its control ; the utmost it succeeded in doing was in some sense to ride without directing the storm. Mr. Forster's first decisive step was to strike a blow at the Land League. In November he ordered the prosecution of Mr. Parnell, Mr. Biggar, and several of the officials of the organisation, and before the year was out—this prosecution being clearly doomed to prove abortive—he announced his intention of introducing a Coercion Bill. This step threw the Irish members under Mr. Parnell and the Liberal Government into relations of definitive antagonism.

Mr. Forster introduced his Coercion Bill on January 24th, 1881. It was a formidable measure, which enabled the Chief Secretary, by signing a warrant, to arrest any man on suspicion of having committed a given offence, and to imprison him without trial at the pleasure of the Government. It practically suspended the liberties of Ireland. The Irish members exhausted every resource of Parliamentary action in resisting it,



MR. MICHAEL DAVITT.
(From a photograph by W. Lawrence, Dublin.)

and their tactics resulted in several scenes unprecedented in Parliamentary history. In order to pass the Bill it was necessary to suspend them in a body several times. Mr. Gladstone, with manifest pain, found himself, as leader of the House, the agent by whom this extreme resolve had to be executed. At length, on February 25th, the measure was got through, and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then edited by Mr. John Morley, rebuked Mr. Forster for his "rather uncouth exultation" at the fact. "We do not know," it said, "that it is a good reason why a Liberal Minister should feel particularly triumphant because he has passed a measure over the heads of all the Liberal representatives of the country concerned."

The Coercion Bill passed, Mr. Gladstone introduced (on April 7th) his Land Bill of 1881, which was the measure of conciliation intended to balance the measure of repression. This was really a great and sweeping reform, whose dominant feature was the introduction of the novel and far-reaching principle of the State stepping in between landlord and tenant and fixing the rents. The Bill had some defects, as a series of amending Acts, which were subsequently passed by both Liberal and Tory Governments, proved; but, apart from these, it was on the whole the greatest measure of land reform ever passed for Ireland by the Imperial Parliament.

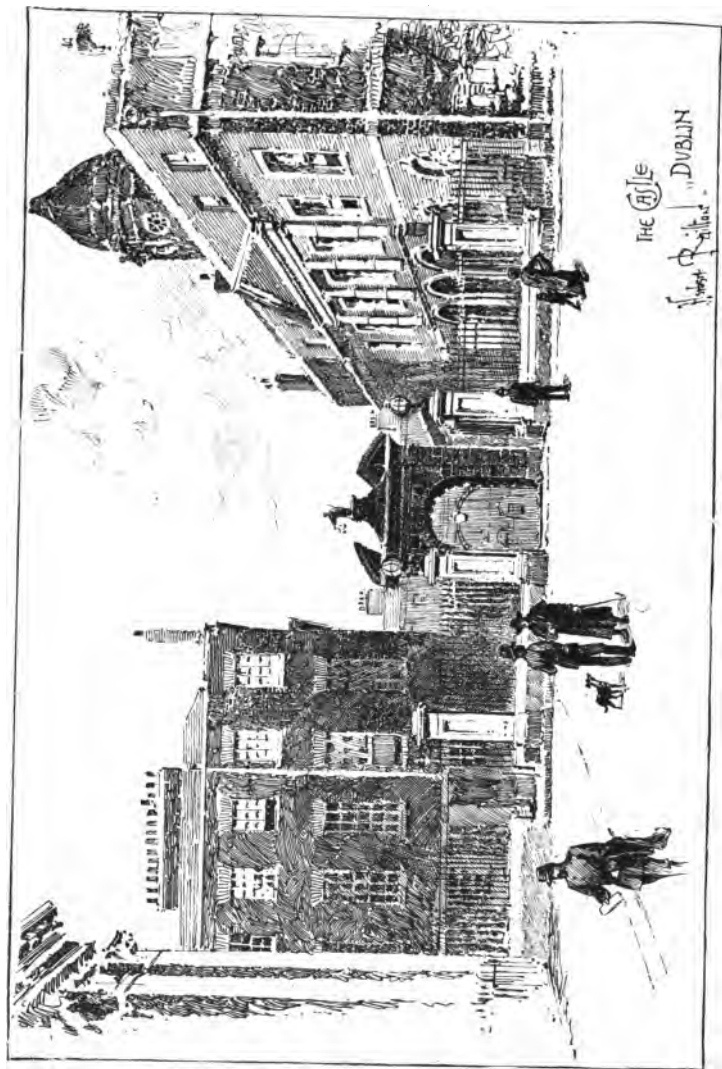
The Act was to be administered by a number of Land Commissioners appointed by the Government. In these Commissioners, the selection of whom would be determined in Dublin Castle, the Irish members professed to have no confidence; they would, they said, belong almost altogether to the landlord class, and would defeat the purpose of the Act. This view determined the policy of the Irish members in regard to the measure, and Mr. Parnell advised

the farmers not to rush into the land courts, but to select a number of special cases and let these be the first submitted to the Commissioners as a means of testing their *bona fides*.

The Government did not look upon this policy of "test cases" as sincerely meant; they took the view that it was simply a device of Mr. Parnell's, for the purposes of his agitation, to cheat the people out of the benefits of the Land Act—a view which subsequent history proved to have been very mistaken. Accordingly, before the policy could be put into force, Mr. Forster struck a famous *coup d'état*. On October 13th, 1881, he arrested Mr. Parnell and several Irish members, as well as numbers of local leaders throughout the country, and he proclaimed the Land League an illegal organisation. Mr. Michael Davitt had previously been arrested, the Home Secretary revoking his ticket-of-leave.

On the day of Mr. Parnell's arrest Mr. Gladstone made a speech in the Guildhall, which contained a passage which is interesting as showing how at such a moment—at the very crisis of coercion—his mind was working on the subject of Home Rule. After announcing, amid jubilant cheers, that the Government had just arrested the man who had "made himself above all others prominent in the attempt to destroy the authority of the law," he went on:

My Lord Mayor, it is not with the people of Ireland that we are at issue. . . . It is not on any point connected with the exercise of local government in Ireland—it is not even on any point connected with what is popularly known in that country as Home Rule, and which may be understood in any one of a hundred senses, some of them perfectly acceptable and even desirable; others of them mischievous and revolutionary. . . . I for one will hail with satisfaction and delight any measure of local government for Ireland, or for any



DUBLIN CASTLE.

(From a photograph by W. Lawrence, Dublin.)

portion of the country, provided only that it conform to this one condition—that it shall not break down or impair the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament.

But Mr. Forster had committed himself irrevocably to a policy of coercion. No impartial critic can refuse a tribute to the honesty and benevolence of this statesman's intentions with regard to Ireland. From the days of the famine of 1847, when on behalf of the Society of Friends he distributed relief amongst the suffering people, his interest in the country was keen. He started on his career as Chief Secretary full of hope and courage, and applied himself to his task with an earnest and unsparing zeal. But the phenomena with which he was confronted deceived his judgment. He was led into a wrong theory of the situation, and having once made his false step, he was drawn deeper and deeper into the morass. His theory was that the Irish people were intimidated by the members of Parliament they had elected to represent them. If these could be locked up, and with them a number of "village ruffians" who were inciting the people to crime, he believed the country would be quiet, and that the people, freed from this tyranny, would rally with relief to the Government. Events quickly proved that this was a singularly false calculation. Amongst the men he locked up were those local leaders—poor-law guardians, town commissioners, priests, and so forth—whose influence was most effective in restraining the peasantry from desperate excesses. When this restraining influence was removed, crime and outrage simply increased. The more intense the coercion—and eventually it went so far that Ireland seemed to have been handed over to a few divisional magistrates, of whom Mr. Clifford Lloyd was the chief, who rode about with immense escorts, and exercised an

authority as despotic as those Bimbashis or Yuzbachis who had brought Bulgaria to such a pass—the worse the state of the country grew.

At length the Government resolved to give it up and to proceed on other lines. Mr. Parnell was released from Kilmainham. Mr. Gladstone—as a consequence of an understanding which was negotiated with Parnell while he was in prison, and which has accordingly been known as the “Kilmainham Treaty”—determined to bring in an Arrears Bill, and to commence a course of action in harmony with the Irish representatives. Mr. Forster resigned. A new era seemed about to begin, and all was relief and rejoicing. Four days later, on May 6th, 1882, the cup of hope was dashed from Ireland’s lips again by a horrible crime. Lord Frederick Cavendish, the Chief Secretary who had gone to Ireland to replace Mr. Forster, and the Under-Secretary, Mr. Burke, were hacked to death with knives in the Phoenix Park.

We now know that this crime was the work of a conspiracy which was hatched in Dublin during the later days of the Coercion *régime*. Discontent, Earl Cowper, the Lord-Lieutenant, had said, had been “driven under the surface”; and under the surface, under the very walls of the Castle, all unknown to the Chief Secretary, the Invincibles had been holding their meetings, and sending their emissaries to lie in wait for Mr. Forster himself at a moment when he dreamed that he had the real authors of Irish crime and disaffection under lock and key.

But in May, 1882, the episode remained wrapped in mystery, and its only effect was to create panic and horror, and to put back the clock for Ireland. A new Coercion Act was passed almost immediately. It was vigorously administered by Lord Spencer and Mr. Trevelyan, and

the Irish members were once more estranged from the Liberal Government.

In the meantime new embarrassments were being created for Mr. Gladstone in another quarter of the world.

The Egyptian fellahen rose under Arabi Pasha in rebellion against the Khedival authority. The British Government interfered to put down the rebellion. Alexandria was bombarded by the British Fleet, and General Wolseley was despatched at the head of an expedition which defeated the Egyptians at



GENERAL GORDON.

Tel-el-Kebir. These exploits, quite worthy of the Jingo era, were not, as it now appears, directly owing to Mr. Gladstone's initiative, but of course as head of the Government he has to bear the responsibility for them. They were little to the liking of the Liberal party in Parliament or in the country, and they cost the Government several votes. The lapse into Coercion in Ireland was

the first, these constituted a second departure from Liberal principles.

When the bombardment of Alexandria was resolved upon, Mr. John Bright (on July 15th, 1882) resigned his place in the Cabinet. The troubles in Egypt had a sequel in disturbances in the Soudan. General Gordon was sent to Khartoum alone on a mission of conciliation, but he was attacked and surrounded in that place by the forces of the Mahdi. There was much delay in sending an expedition to rescue him, and when at length it was despatched it was only to find that Gordon had been murdered some few hours before its arrival at Khartoum. The fate of this heroic and chivalrous soldier, whoever ought rightly to bear the blame of it, was laid at the door of the Government.

Another event which contributed very considerably to weaken the Government's position at this period was the conclusion of a war which had been entered into with the Boers in South Africa. After a severe defeat of the English at Majuba Hill, Mr. Gladstone magnanimously resolved to make peace rather than wait until a punitive expedition of the stronger Power should have had time to wipe out with further bloodshed the Boer victory. Mr. Gladstone's magnanimity was less appreciated in England at the time than it afterwards came to be by the colonists at the Cape.

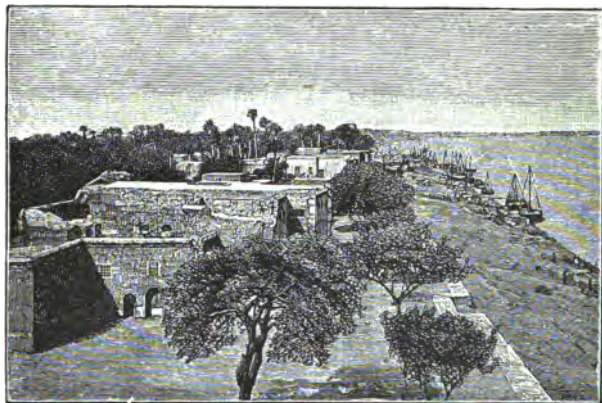
All this time the Parnellite members were working in harmony with the Tory Opposition, and as the Government majority slowly fell away they vigilantly watched their opportunity to be revenged. Dissensions began to appear in the Government upon the Irish question. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke were known to be pronounced anti-Coercionists, and to be in favour of granting Ireland a very wide measure of local self-government, and when the time came for renewing the Crimes

Act, as the Spencer-Trevelyan Coercion Act was called, they threatened to resign. They held their places, however, while the Government announced on May 13th, 1885, its intention to renew that measure. On the 8th of the following month the opportunity of the Parnellites arrived. In close alliance with the Tories they defeated the Government on one of the resolutions of the Budget. The scene which followed was a curious one. The Irish raised cries of "No Coercion," while the Tories delivered themselves up to a frenzy of jubilation, waving hats and handkerchiefs, and wildly cheering. Lord Randolph Churchill jumped on a bench, brandished his hat madly above his head, and altogether behaved as if he were beside himself. Mr. Gladstone calmly resumed the letter to the Queen which he had been writing on his knee, while the clerk at the table proceeded to run through the orders of the day, as if nothing particular had happened. When in a few moments the defeated Premier moved the adjournment, he did so still holding his letter in one hand and the pen in the other, and the Conservatives surged through the doorway, tumultuously cheering.*

Mr. Gladstone having resigned, after this adverse division, Lord Salisbury formed a Government which depended for its existence on Parnellite votes. The era of the Kilmainham Treaty seemed to have returned. Coercion was dropped, the Tory Lord-Lieutenant (Lord Carnarvon) drove about Ireland delivering speeches with a Nationalist tinge in them, and as the general election approached Lord Salisbury spoke of self-government for Ireland on the Hungarian model. The general impression given was that the Tories meant to adopt the policy

* "A Diary of Two Parliaments," by H. W. Lucy. See also Mr. T. P. O'Connor's vivid description in "Gladstone's House of Commons."

of Home Rule. That the Irish leader had the best reason for coming to this conclusion was made clear afterwards when it was revealed that Mr. Parnell had met the Lord-Lieutenant, by the latter's invitation, in an empty house in London and discussed with him there the provisions of a drastic Home Rule scheme, which Lord Carnarvon declared himself—and presumably his colleagues—prepared to support. The Irish leader accordingly advised his compatriots in England to vote for the Tories at the general election.



KHARTOUM.

CHAPTER XII.

"THE GRAND OLD MAN,"

Election of 1885-6—Gladstone takes up Home Rule—Prime Minister for Third Time—Introduces Home Rule Bill—Beginning of Liberal Unionist Secession—Home Rule Bill rejected by House of Commons—General Election of 1886—Lord Salisbury's Second Administration—Mr. Balfour's Coercion *Régime*—"Remember Mitchelstown"—Parnell's Leadership—Split in the Nationalist Party—Election of 1892—Gladstone Prime Minister for Fourth Time—Brings in Second Home Rule Bill—Carried through Commons, Rejected by Lords—A Heavy Session—Immense Labours—Eyesight Fails—Resigns Premiership and Retires from Public Life.

THE general election of 1885-6 proved a disappointment to both Liberals and Tories. The latter, even with the votes of the Irish Nationalists, were hardly strong enough to carry on the Government. The former without the Irish vote were in a minority. The Irish vote held the balance of power. Mr. Parnell had been returned with a party of eighty-five supporters—the first time, be it noted, that a clear majority of genuine Home Rulers had been sent from Ireland—and was the most powerful personage in the situation. If these eighty-six votes could be joined to the Liberals, a Liberal Government might be formed with a working majority of at least 150.*

Mr. Gladstone, during the Parliament of 1886, published a pamphlet, "The History of an Idea"—corresponding with the one which he issued when disestablishing the Irish Church—in which he explained the genesis of his views upon Home Rule; and from that pamphlet we learn that,

* The exact returns of the election were : Liberals, 333 ; Conservatives (including 2 Independents), 251 ; Nationalists, 86.

be the means of closing the long account of Ireland's grievances against England, and rendering fast the bonds of union between the two countries by the simple process of giving the Irish people control of their own affairs.

His momentous resolution became known before the new Parliament assembled, and Mr. Parnell and his colleagues resolved to turn out the Tory Government. This they did on an amendment to the address moved by Mr. Jesse Collings. In that debate Mr. Gladstone, with a quaint and characteristic mixture of humour and shrewdness, "availing himself of the privilege of old age," warned his less experienced followers, especially those who had just come into the House for the first time, against committing themselves rashly to any declarations of their views. "I would tell them," he said, "of my own intention to keep my counsel and reserve my own freedom until I see the occasion when there may be a prospect of public benefit in endeavouring to make a movement forward ; and I will venture to recommend them, as an old Parliamentary hand, to do the same." He was sent for by the Queen on January 29th, and on February 1st, 1886, having duly kissed hands, he was Prime Minister of England for the third time.

The interval between the formation of the Government and the 8th of April was devoted to the preparation of two great Irish Bills, one establishing Home Rule, and the other purchasing out the Irish landlords and establishing a peasant proprietary. In the interval the first symptoms of the great schism which these Bills were to create in the Liberal party began to be apparent. The Marquis of Hartington from the first refused to have anything to do with a Government which conceded Home Rule. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan joined the



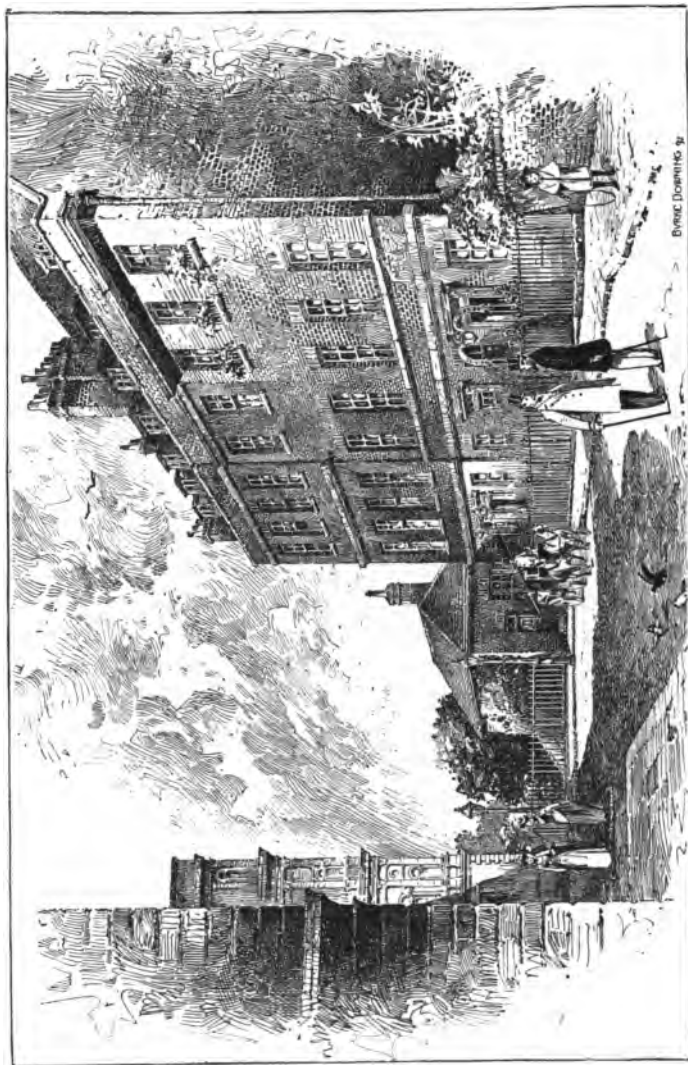
LORD SALISBURY.

(From a photograph by Russell & Sons, Tufnell Park.)

Government, but before the Bills were ready they both resigned in disapproval of the scheme. Mr. Gladstone filled their places and went on with the work, and on the 8th of April he moved the introduction of his Home Rule Bill.

The scene that afternoon was one of the most remarkable in Parliamentary history. Never before was such interest manifested in a debate by either the public or the members of the House. In order to secure their places, members arrived at St. Stephen's at six o'clock in the morning, and spent the day on the premises; and, a thing quite unprecedented, members who could not find places on the benches filled up the floor of the House with rows of chairs. The strangers', diplomats', peers', and ladies' galleries were filled to overflowing. Men begged even to be admitted to the ventilating passages beneath the floor of the Chamber that they might in some sense be witnesses of the greatest feat in the lifetime of an illustrious old man of eighty. Around Palace Yard an enormous crowd surged, waiting to give the veteran a welcome as he drove up from Downing Street.

Mr. Gladstone arrived in the House, pale and still panting from the excitement of his reception in the streets. As he sat there the entire Liberal party—with the exception of Lord Hartington, Sir Henry James, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir George Trevelyan—and the Nationalist members, by a spontaneous impulse, sprang to their feet and cheered him again and again. The speech which he delivered was in every way worthy of the occasion. It expounded, with marvellous lucidity and a noble eloquence, a tremendous scheme of constructive legislation—the re-establishment of a legislature in Ireland, but one subordinate to the Imperial Parliament, and hedged round with every safeguard which could protect the unity of the Empire. It took three hours in delivery,



NO. 10, DOWNING STREET.

and was listened to throughout with the utmost attention on every side of the House. At its close all parties united in a tribute of admiration for the genius which had astonished them with such an exhibition of its powers.

Before the second reading of the Bill came on, however, it became apparent that the Liberal party was hopelessly divided on the subject. Mr. Bright joined the dissentients. The Bill was criticised in a confusing manner from various directions. Some said the Irish members ought to be retained at Westminster ; some thought the exclusion of the Irish members was the best part of the Bill ; some objected to the Land Purchase scheme by which the measure was accompanied ; some objected to Home Rule on any conditions ; some, like Mr. Chamberlain, were in favour of alternative schemes.

Mr. Gladstone warned his critics that there was no middle alternative between Home Rule and Coercion—a proposition which they vehemently denied—and at the close of the second-reading debate he delivered one of the most magnificent, the most moving and inspiring of all his orations, declaring that his policy “held the field,” and that the “flowing tide” was with its friends, the “ebbing tide” with its enemies. But eloquence proved of no avail, and, when the division was taken, the Home Rule Bill was found to have been rejected by a majority of thirty. This was on the morning of June 8th. It is said that in his room afterwards, when he learned this result, Mr. Gladstone had one of his rare moments of weakness. Possibly it occurred to him, as he saw his policy defeated, his party rent asunder, the colleagues of a lifetime severed from his side, that the third great turning-point in his life which he had predicted in his letter to the Bishop of Oxford had at last arrived. But weakness does not long hold possession

of Mr. Gladstone's soul. The warrior was presently into the fight again with all his old resolution.

He determined at once to dissolve Parliament and take the verdict of the country on his policy. It was the boldest and, indeed, the only course. But the country was evidently taken by surprise by the magnitude and novelty of the proposition submitted to it ; and, besides, it was bewildered by the sight of trusted Liberal leaders bitterly at issue on the subject. The controversy which ensued, and which was to continue for several years, was one of the fiercest into which British politics were ever plunged. Chasms seemed to have opened between parties and classes. Mr. Gladstone, who had declared in his manifesto before the election that it was a struggle between the classes and the masses, was boycotted by Society, and found himself once again the object of a hatred, on the part of his opponents, as intense as the devotion he inspired amongst those who followed him.*

A majority against Home Rule, consisting of Liberal Unionists and Tories, was returned at the general election. But the majority, when analysed, was anything but a hopeless one from Mr. Gladstone's point of view.

Lord Salisbury formed a second Administration, and it was not long in office when it justified Mr. Gladstone's predictions. Its first measure for Ireland was a Land Purchase Bill ; its second, less than a year later, was a perpetual Coercion Bill. A Land Bill of Mr. Parnell's,

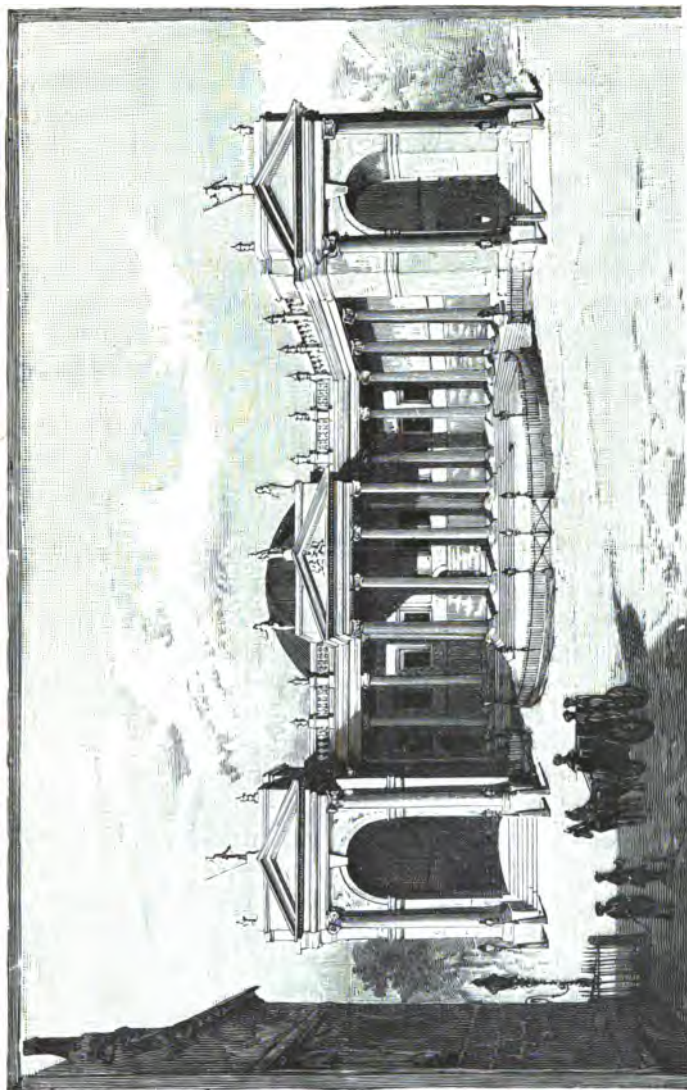
* A curious study would be the literature and art of the vituperation through which Mr. Gladstone has passed in the course of his career. At this period feeling went so far that one of the campaign cartoons which was widely distributed, and had a great success with a certain sort of Unionist voters, represented Mr. Gladstone burning in hell, the devil and his crew making sport of him. This seemed a favourite and presumably consoling manner amongst his enemies of picturing him. An election song, which likewise enjoyed a wide vogue, was devoted to the celebration of the same theme. Here is a stanza from it ; it will be seen that the pro-

introduced to meet a sudden agricultural depression, had been rejected, and on its rejection a combination, called the Plan of Campaign, was started by some of the Irish leaders. Mr. Arthur Balfour, when he became Chief Secretary, set himself to defeat this combination with all the forces of coercion. The scenes of the Forster *régime* were re-enacted with a difference—the difference that the law under which they were enacted was perpetual, and that the persons who were imprisoned received some pretence of a trial.* Dozens of members of Parliament were arrested and subjected to exceptional indignities and harshness in prison. Evictions were carried out wholesale, and the battering-ram made its first appearance as a vindicator of landlord rights. Public meetings were suppressed by the exercise of armed force. At one of these—held in

duction is not without a certain grotesque humour mingled with its savagery :—

“ When the G.O.M. goes down to his doom
 He will ride in a fiery chariot,
 And sit in state, on a red-hot plate,
 Between Satan and Judas Iscariot.
 Says the Devil, ‘ We’re rather full, you see,
 But I’ll do the best I can ;
 I’ll let Ananias and Judas go free,
 And take in the Grand Old Man ! ’
 Gone from the cares of office !
 Gone from the head of affairs !
 Gone in the head, they tell us !
 Gone—whither, no one cares ! ”

* An amiable Tory baronet somewhat given to malapropisms, Sir Walter Barttelott, M.P., hit off this difference with unconscious effect when explaining the superiority of Mr. Balfour’s measure in a debate on the Wednesday afternoon. “ Under the Bill of Mr. Forster,” he said, “ men were imprisoned—er—a—without being charged with any crime. Under the measure of my right honourable friend every prisoner has a crime—er—a—assigned to him.”



THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE, DUBLIN (AS IT WAS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY).

Mitchelstown—which had not even been “proclaimed,” three men were shot dead by the police. “Remember Mitchelstown!” was one of the battle-cries which Mr. Gladstone gave to an Opposition which he led with as much vigour as he did in the days of the Bulgarian agitation.

After a few years of this work, the British public, at bye-elections, in the press, and in various ways, showed unmistakable symptoms of having grown sick of coercion and of having become educated into a belief in the expediency and safety of the policy of Home Rule.

It was at this time—in November, 1890—that a great disaster occurred to the Irish party. Its leader, Mr. Parnell, appeared as co-respondent in an undefended divorce suit; and Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter, which was made public, but which had been intended to be privately communicated to the Irish members, in which he declared that such was the effect upon English public opinion of Mr. Parnell’s connection with this case that his “continuance at the present moment in the leadership” of the Irish party would render Mr. Gladstone’s “retention of the leadership of the Liberal party . . . almost a nullity.” This letter, whose premature publication was the result of some lamentable bungling, occasioned a serious split in the Irish party, both sides fighting out their differences in Ireland with the greatest bitterness. Into the history of this matter it is not necessary to enter here further than to note the fact that the division in the Irish ranks had a very considerable effect in damping the ardour which had begun to exist in Great Britain for the policy of Home Rule.

Notwithstanding this drawback, however, when the general election arrived in 1892, Mr. Gladstone was returned to power with a majority of between thirty and

forty Home Rulers, British and Irish, over the Tories and Liberal Unionists combined, and for the fourth time found himself Prime Minister.

His first great measure in the new Parliament was a new Home Rule Bill, which was introduced on February 13th, 1893. This measure differed from the Bill of 1886 chiefly in the fact that it provided for the retention of the Irish members at Westminster. It was violently opposed by the Opposition; but Mr. Gladstone defended it, throughout the prolonged discussions to which it was subjected in the House of Commons, with a vigour and eloquence which he had never surpassed.

He took upon his own shoulders the entire labour of piloting it through its various stages. This meant constant attendance and incessant anxiety, speaking on every clause and every amendment, forming a dozen times a night important decisions, conciliating opposition where it was possible, bearing it down where it could not be conciliated, and composing the frequent and still more dangerous differences of the measure's own supporters.

It was a lavish and unprecedented exhibition of the power of Mr. Gladstone's genius and character; of his patience, courtesy, tact, adroitness, resourcefulness, fighting capacity, and, perhaps above all, of his indomitable will. He felt, no doubt, what was quite true—that upon his spending himself thus to the utmost the fate of the Bill depended. With a narrow and heterogeneous majority, and an Opposition powerful, united, and persistent, the fortunes of a great contentious measure were at best precarious. There were moments when the majority seemed on the point of disappearing; there were moments when, weary and disheartened, the Government forces seemed ready to abandon their task. It was Mr. Gladstone's faith and determination

which bore them along. He even carried his directing activity into the Whips' department. The chief Liberal Whip, Mr. Marjoribanks, afterwards Lord Tweedmouth, has left interesting testimony on this point. "Undue credit has been given to me," he said, at a meeting at Castle Douglas, "for the way in which I filled my own office of Whip; but the real fact of the matter is that I was but the hand of Mr. Gladstone. He it was who was ready to do a thousand little things which made matters go smoothly. As he once said to me, 'One of the first duties of a Minister of the Crown is to be always ready to darn and patch the holes that are made by the daily wear of the machine.'

He really, in this his last Parliament, seemed to dominate the assembly by a sort of prescriptive right which opponents as well as friends acknowledged. There was once a time, as we have seen, when even in the House of Commons his enemies forgot the respect that was due to his position and his services. Such a state of things was possible no longer. The most emphatic expressions of admiration—it would not be too much to say of reverence—came from the Opposition benches. Mr. Balfour spoke of the delight and the fascination with which they watched his leading of the House and listened to his unsurpassable eloquence. Old age had come to clothe with its pathos, as well as with its majesty, the white-haired, heroic figure. His eyesight had begun to fail so far that he was unable to read the extracts he wished to quote in his speeches, and on one occasion Mr. John Morley read them to the House for him, he standing by, waiting to resume his speech when the reading of the extracts was done. The proceeding was quite out of order, and nothing could better exemplify the sympathetic mood of the House than the fact that it permitted it without a murmur. There was no generous

man, no matter of what party, who was not touched by the spectacle of such unsparing devotion, and such dauntless courage, allied with so much infirmity. On his part, his



MR. A. J. BALFOUR.

(From a photograph by Lafayette, Dublin.)

years seemed to have wrought upon Mr. Gladstone himself a softening influence ; the imperious temper had surrendered all its asperity, and had replaced it by an exquisite benevolence of manner when dealing with opponents which must have been irresistible.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor relates a little incident of these debates which illustrates the nature of the exertions which Mr. Gladstone was putting forth, and the feeling of the House towards him. Close on midnight an amendment in Committee came to a division. Mr. Gladstone was still in his place. For hours he had been fighting his battle—patient, conciliatory, dexterous, steady; but the long hours of the sultry night, the prolonged struggle, had for a few moments proved too much for his splendid but aged frame. Unlike the other members of the House, he had not had the advantage of wandering in the open freshness of the Terrace, of relieving the strain in the smoking-room, or of finding a momentary relaxation in the the library. And thus, Mr. O'Connor says, a beautiful little scene came to be enacted :

The division lobby is often one of the most interesting sights of the House of Commons. There are huddled together for a brief space all the strange and varied personalities of the House. Even in the lobby, however, the great personality of Mr. Gladstone stands out. It is his usual custom to rush to one of the writing-tables, and, after the fashion on which the grand symmetry and orderliness of his great life have been planned and relentlessly pursued, he will not wholly lose even the brief space of time which is there expended. Accordingly, he is to be seen writing away for dear life—sometimes holding the blotting-pad on his knees when he goes back to the House, and often calmly pursuing his work amid the shouts of hatred or triumph around him.

But on Tuesday night, for a moment, he allowed the natural man to conquer. Selecting a seat in a quiet corner, he fell into a brief, hurried, but profound slumber, and was lost to the world of teeming and shouting life around him. The pallid look on the face told of the fatigue of the day, but the splendid mouth, firm set, was there—with that look of unalterable determination which conquers all things. It was a beautiful and impressive picture, and, by a quick and electric communicativeness, all its pathos and splendour and historic significance were gathered by the crowd. The usual noise of the lobby was stilled. Silently, reverently, members paused for a moment as they went by, whispered a comment in low accents, and passed on with hearts stirred silently, but profoundly, to reverence, awe, love.

At last, on Friday, September 1st, the Home Rule Bill was carried through its third reading in the House of Commons. The majority was thirty-four. The fate, however, which awaited the measure in the House of Lords was a foregone conclusion. After a debate of three nights, for which an unprecedented number of peers assembled, it was rejected on September 8th by a majority of 378 in a House of 460.

The time for laying down the great burden was at hand. Such labours as those of that extraordinarily long session of 1893-4 are not undertaken at Mr. Gladstone's age with impunity. In March, 1894, the Liberal party, and it may justly be said the country, were grieved by the announcement that the veteran's health was at last showing symptoms of serious failure under the mighty strain to which it had been subjected. His eyesight was beginning so far to break down that he felt it necessary to resign the Premiership and retire from public life. This news was received with consternation by his party; but the resolution of the spent warrior was irrevocable. On the 3rd of March he and Mrs. Gladstone went down to Osborne, where he delivered up for the last time his seals of office to the Queen. Her Majesty offered, as she had done in 1874, to raise him to the peerage as an earl, but he declined the honour. Lord Rosebery was sent for to undertake the duty of reconstructing the Government, and he was accepted by the Liberal party as its new leader.

Mr. Gladstone took no formal farewell of that House which he had adorned for so long, and to whose glories he had added so great a chapter. But his last speech in the assembly was a significant one. It was delivered on March 1st, on the consideration of the Lords' amendments to the Parish Councils' Bill, and its purport was to defend the privileges of the representative against the encroachments of

the hereditary Chamber, and to warn the latter that the conflicts of the two Houses had reached such a point that they must now go forward to an issue on which the country must be invited to pronounce.

The bearing of the aged statesman on entering into his retirement was marked by a pathetic dignity which well seemed the close of a stormy and illustrious career. He bore the operations which it was necessary to have performed on his eye with a fortitude that was the admiration of the surgeons. His friends read aloud to him from his favourite authors, from Homer, from Virgil, and from Dante, until he had recovered the first partial use of his eyesight, when he at once devoted himself to those classical and theological studies which had so often before been the solace of his leisure.

CONCLUSION.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS,

His Religious Spirit—Method of Spending Sunday—His Favourite Hymn—Life at Hawarden—Method of Work in Office—Correspondence—Postcards—A Masterful Prime Minister—Intellectual Versatility—Methodical Living—Exercise—Woodcutting—Mrs. Gladstone's Solicitude—Deputations to Hawarden—Changed Feeling in Parliament and Country on the Retirement.

It is sufficiently evident that Mr. Gladstone is one of those great and complex personalities with what the French speak

of as a "temperament," who excite both violent antagonisms and violent enthusiasms, who are the subject of as much misunderstanding as comprehension, and who are continually baffling and eluding the dissecting knives of their critics. His career is strewn with what seem to be startling inconsistencies, his character abounds in apparent contradictions. "The rising hope of the stern and unbending



Tories," the disciple of Burke and Canning, he became the most daring Liberal innovator the century had seen; the author of "The Church in its Relations with the State," Oxford's chosen champion, he became the most dangerous foe of

Establishment ; we have seen him denouncing with lofty and thunderous eloquence the idea of England interfering as a moral censor in the internal affairs of other nations, and within a few months, after a chance visit to Naples, we have seen him assuming that *role* himself, and calling on his country—government and people—to visit with holy indignation the administration of King Ferdinand ; we have seen him expressing positive loathing for the character and policy of Lord Palmerston, and we have seen him, within a session, Lord Palmerston's Chancellor of the Exchequer ; he came into power in 1880 on a wave of Liberal enthusiasm the result of his agitation against the Jingoism of Lord Beaconsfield, and presently his own government was outrivalling that Jingoism in Egypt and the Soudan ; he who voted steadily for coercion for Ireland down to his last Parliament but one, and who, even while conceding Irish reforms, always scouted the demands of the Home Rulers, introduced the Home Rule Bill of 1886 and surpassed the most extreme Nationalist member in the vehemence with which he stigmatised the "blackguardism and baseness" by which the Union was effected ; again and again while we have been marvelling at the consummate craft and guile of his political tactique has he upset all our deductions by the superb recklessness with which, against the obvious arguments of expediency, he has cast his whole fate upon the hazard, for the sake of some cause or principle which he had adopted. In presence of this record critics are perplexed. Some argue that these transformations mark but the growth and development of a powerful mind struggling, against obstacles of education and circumstance, towards its natural destiny ; others consider this capacity for rapid change the evidence of an insincere character, while others again hold it the symptom of an unstable

one;* others, still, see in the subtlety and the eagerness with which Mr. Gladstone strives to reconcile his various attitudes a propensity for sophistry not without a taint of hypocrisy. Much of this enigmatical contrariety is really explicable by the fact that the character of Mr. Gladstone's mind is not a political, but a scholastic one, though, living in a political age, he was obliged to choose a political career. "His speciality is the power of making of fine distinctions," says a distinguished man of letters, one of his contemporaries, in a letter to the writer.

"These fine-spun distinctions are all-important in metaphysics and mathematics, but in politics, which belong far more to the practical judgment than to the purely logical faculty, they are often dangerous, and not having been there sought or expected, they often give an appearance of disingenuousness where that was not intended. With his scholastic subtlety Mr. Gladstone unites another quality, the most dangerous he could have joined to it—viz., an extraordinary rhetorical, as distinguished from a nobler thing, a grand oratorical, power. The subtlety and the rhetoric thus going together are rendered far the more dangerous from a third characteristic—viz., an intense ardour of temperament, like an actor's, which, while he is speaking, makes him seem immensely in earnest. That inflames the sympathies of his hearers, who do not know that he might have shown, and for the moment have felt, the same ardour if he had been speaking on the other side of the question. He would have seemed quite as ardent against Home Rule as he was for it had he chanced to take that side. His principles give you no power of guessing what his actions may prove, because, when you know them, you cannot guess whether he will *apply* them in one way or in exactly the opposite way."

But none of these explanations covers the whole ground. They do not account for Mr. Gladstone's chivalry and courage, and magnanimity to opponents, for example, or, we may add, for his extremely shrewd practical judgment as a tactician.

* It is interesting to note that his father at an early period—when his son was leaving the university—seemed to have received this impression of instability. The following anecdote is told by Bishop Wordsworth of St.

Without attempting to dispose of conflicting theories, there is, it seems to us, one clue to the labyrinth which may be profitably followed. It begins to appear as one passes from Mr. Gladstone's work, and views him in the familiar aspects of private life. The complexity does not, indeed, diminish, but there becomes evident behind it, as a light behind a screen of intricate pattern, a great simplicity, and one is conscious of an ordered harmony in the structure of his chequered life. That clue is furnished by the word Religion. Whatever else men question, they do not question, nowadays, the sincerity of Mr. Gladstone's religious sentiment. It is undoubtedly the keystone of his character. From his youth at Oxford, when he wished to enter Holy Orders, to the period of his final retirement from public life, when he devoted himself anew to writing theological essays in the magazines, the Church has claimed his allegiance as much as the State; he has been Churchman and statesman in equal parts; or, rather, it may be said that, throughout his career, he has sought to make his politics the servant of his religion. The astrologers ought to find that, like his favourite, Dante, he was born under the constellation of the Gemini—"Gloriose stelle, lume pregno di gran virtù."

The conviction that there is a Divine purpose in all things, and that each of us has a solemn responsibility, in relation to our part in serving that purpose, for the use we make of our time and our gifts, has tintured all his

Andrew's in his "Annals of My Early Life." The bishop's uncle, the poet, met the elder Gladstone at dinner, and congratulated him on the success of his son, William, at Oxford, expressing the hope that he would be equally successful in Parliament. "Yes, sir," replied the father, "I thank you; my son has certainly distinguished himself greatly at the University, and I trust he will continue to do so when he enters public life; for there is no doubt he is a man of great *ability*, but," he added, "he has no *stability*."

conduct, public and private, and almost all his utterances. This conviction, together with his ability to persuade himself that any given course on which he had decided was not only right, but was in the nature of a special design of Providence, explains more than anything else both the extraordinary courage and disregard of consequences which distinguished his action at various crises of his life, and the imperious attitude he was ready to assume towards all who opposed or thwarted his work. Often in urging his great measures of policy he spoke in the tones less of the statesman than of the seer and the prophet, and he did not hesitate to arraign the nation itself before the bar of the Almighty, to warn it of its moral responsibility, and menace it with the punishments due to unatoned-for sin. This was the tone in which he spoke, like another Jeremiah, throughout that great crusade which he waged against the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield, when at times, threatening her with the consequences of iniquity, he seemed to stand alone against his country, when he was mobbed in the streets and hooted in the House of Commons. In one of his speeches on the Afghan War during that period, he called upon his hearers to consider whether the war was just or unjust. For his part, he feared it was grossly and totally unjust. "If so," he continued, "we should come under the stroke of the everlasting law that suffering shall follow sin; and the day will arrive—come it soon, or come it late—when the people of England will discover that national injustice is the surest road to national downfall."

He adopted a similar strain throughout the different stages of his Irish policy. When at length he had convinced himself of the expediency and justice of Home Rule, and had looked closely into the methods by which

the Union was carried, he declared, quite independent of the commonplace arguments on the subject, that a union so effected could not but bring misfortune unless its iniquitous terms were redressed by the act of justice he proposed. However men of less transcendental mould may view this frame of mind, they must admit that it has been to Mr. Gladstone a source of enormous moral strength.

The sincerity and the gentler and sweeter aspects of this temperament are more obvious to those who have been privileged to see him in the daily round of private life. Let us have done with controversial matter, and consider him now in this more personal and less metaphysical sense.

It has been Mr. Gladstone's habit throughout his life, whenever it has not been physically impossible, to attend church every morning of the week, whether he is in town or in the country. At Hawarden he is usually up before seven, and after a light breakfast he trudges on foot, before eight, to the parish church, of which his son is the rector. The harshest weather does not deter him from this daily duty. Buttoned up tightly, a Scotch plaid wound around him, a soft felt hat on his head, and in his hand a stout walking-stick, he braves the wind and the rain. With his pallid face, its more benignant traits brought into emphasis by the spiritual thoughts on which he is employed, this silver-haired octogenarian, the most illustrious of living statesmen, marching through the storm to his morning prayers, must be an inspiring figure to the villagers who run to their doors to salute him. It has been his custom, unless ill-health forbade it, to read the lessons at the Sunday service in this village church whenever he is at Hawarden. He stands erect as he reads, one hand grasping for support the huge candlestick beside him, the other following the lines down the Bible, and gives forth the words with impressive intona-

tion in his beautiful voice, which easily fills the church. People have come to Hawarden from great distances on Sundays to hear Mr. Gladstone read the lessons.

Sunday is observed by him with peculiar reverence, and to this fact, by the way, he attributes a good deal of that elasticity, intellectual and physical, which he has preserved so far into old age. "Your remark about Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, and his rapt expression in church," writes Louisa, Lady Waterford, in a letter to a friend, "has caused me to rout out a letter Mary Gladstone wrote long ago, a bit of which I must transcribe :—'What I meant about Sunday was that yesterday my father was saying he did not believe he would be alive now if he had not always kept his Sundays quite apart from his ordinary, and *specially his political life*. Not only because of the pure refreshment it has always been to him to turn to holier things on that day, but because it has enabled him to learn more on religious subjects than perhaps any other layman, and so has given him that firm and splendid ground which has ennobled and hallowed all his actions through life.'"* He has never let anything interfere with his Sunday rest and his Sunday reading and meditation.

The religious influence, coupled with the action of a naturally earnest character and a powerful will, is to be traced in the entire disposition of his time. All his time is marked out with the utmost method, including his hours for exercise and recreation, and these regulations are as scrupulously observed as if he felt himself bound to render

* "Memorials of Charlotte, Countess Canning, and Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford," by A. J. C. Hare. In the same volume there is a reference to Mr. Gladstone's favourite hymn. He once spent a Sunday with Lady Waterford at Highcliffe. "We sang 'Rock of Ages,'" she writes, "for the Sunday evening hymn, and Mr. Gladstone afterwards said it was quite his favourite; also that the wording in the book was not the correct old one, and in five minutes he wrote out the right one and read it to me, and I have his name to the document, which is a valuable autograph.

an account of every moment vouchsafed to him. When in office he held it to be his duty to give himself so completely to the public service that often he begrudged himself even the necessary respite for health's sake. Not that he would give up entirely his valetudinarian precautions, for the systematic conservation of one's health he holds to be as much a duty as any other ; but he has often thrown his constitutional walks into the night time, and might be seen in the small hours doing his brisk tramp through the London streets ; and he has often unwittingly put his health in jeopardy by the amount of extra work he has taken on his shoulders. At one time he felt it necessary to examine personally, and even answer with his own hand, an immense proportion of that mass of correspondence which other Prime Ministers leave to be dealt with by discreet private secretaries. When postcards were invented he made great use of this cheap and convenient medium for the purpose of this correspondence, and " Mr. Gladstone's postcards " became a sort of proverb. The most inconsiderable person who chose to write to him on the most irrelevant subject could draw from the great statesman a courteous missive containing a carefully considered and often closely written reply in autograph. This was sheer waste of labour, but Mr. Gladstone looked upon it conscientiously as a duty. Besides, such is the tremendous, the exuberant energy with which he has been endowed, that it seemed as nothing to him to write these postcards while keeping several secretaries employed upon the rest of his correspondence—the entire correspondence being but an interval in the day's work of one who had to lead a party in a country of Parliamentary government, and to act as practical ruler of a mighty empire. In the same way, as Leader of the House of Commons, he imposed upon himself uncalled-for labours. Other Leaders of the



MR. GLADSTONE'S STUDY: HAWARDEN CASTLE.

House have taken the duties of that office more easily. Mr. Disraeli, for example, used to sit abstracted and inscrutable, letting the flood of debate break over him idly, like summer waves upon a rock. Mr. Gladstone thought it right as Leader of the House to listen to every word uttered in debate, no matter by whom, and to reply to every argument for which Government had an answer. In his later years, and down to his last session as Leader, when the fatigue thus entailed was making serious inroads on his constitution, he could not be persuaded to relax his practice, and though he might easily have retired from the House at an earlier hour, he insisted on sitting out the debates to the last, as he insisted on being present in his place from the earliest necessary moment of question-time.

As Prime Minister he was no *laissez-faire* chief, content with a general supervision, and leaving his colleagues a pretty free hand in their own departments. His hand was heavy on all the departments, into whose detailed business even he resolutely entered. Until his private correspondence is given to the world his biography cannot be fully written ; but when these materials are available, we believe it will be seen that he was the most masterful Prime Minister of the century—a century which has included Peel and Palmerston, Lord John Russell and Disraeli. His will and personality were all-pervading. The permanent officials did not escape the influence. He was never satisfied with vague or general explanations from them. With his wonderful powers of concentration he was able to plunge to the root of every question submitted to him, and he insisted on having it laid bare in all its *minutiae*. In another man this overwhelming predominance might provoke some resentment amongst those who served or collaborated with him.

But there is a certain charm as well as a certain awe-inspiring quality about Mr. Gladstone which those feel most who have been in closest contact with him. It is those who have served him in any capacity, from that of fellow-minister to that of domestic servant, who speak of him with most enthusiasm. The following poetic outburst from a speech of Lord Tweedmouth, from which we have already quoted in a previous chapter, is a characteristic utterance of a colleague. Mr. Chamberlain had once compared Mr. Gladstone to a great mountain, whose majesty it was impossible to comprehend until one had moved a long distance away from it. "I can thoroughly realise and apprehend that aspect of Mr. Gladstone," said Lord Tweedmouth, who had been chief Government Whip in the session of 1893, "but I have also been privileged to have a closer vision. I have been able to penetrate into the inmost recesses of that mountain; I have walked under its forests, and drunk the water that ran down from the burns alongside. I have gathered the flowers in its glades; I have admired the strata of its rocks close at hand, and the closer I have known that great man the more I have been amazed by his ability, his intelligence, his resource, his humour, and by the immensely varied character of his mental qualities. . . . I can only say in regard to that long session of Parliament which began in January, 1893, that I, at any rate, shall ever cherish that session as the dearest memory of my life, and will never cease to regret that it is over."

Those varied mental gifts of which Lord Tweedmouth speaks are sufficiently marvellous. Since Lord Bacon's, there has been no intellect applied to English statesmanship of so great a range and grasp as Mr. Gladstone's. It is quite astounding the field of subjects in which Mr. Gladstone

not only takes an active interest, but is deeply informed. Here is an account of a sample conversation with him—it is given in the “Life of John MacGregor,” of “Rob Roy” canoe fame, who met him and his daughter once on board a friend’s yacht. “Had most intensely interesting confab with Chancellor of Exchequer on following subjects among others :—Shoeblocks ; crossing-sweepers ; Refuge Field-lane ; translation of Bible ; Syria and Palestine Fund ; return of the Jews ; iron, brass, and stone age ; copper ore, Canada ; bridges in streets ; arching over whole Thames ; ventilation of London ; *Ecce Homo* ; Gladstone’s letter to author and his reply in clerk’s hand to keep unknown ; speculation as to his being a young man who wrote it ; language of sound at Society of Arts ; Dr. Wolff’s Travels ; Vambéry and his travels ; poster with Reform resolutions at Norwich ; use of the word ‘unscrupulously’ ; marginal notes on Scripture.” Mr. MacGregor adds : “Took leave deeply impressed with the talent, courtesy, and boundless suppleness of Gladstone’s intellect, and of his deep reverence for God and the Bible, and firm hold on Christ.” Yet the foregoing list gives but a faint suggestion of the scope and variety of Mr. Gladstone’s knowledge. One may gain some notion, but not an adequate one, from his printed remains, especially from the collection of miscellanies entitled “Gleanings of Past Years,” which contains essays and addresses on a host of subjects, from Wedgewoodware to the Homeric gods. It hardly needs to be said that, with such knowledge and such powers of expression, Mr. Gladstone is a brilliant conversationalist. He is a brilliant conversationalist in the true sense—one who can listen as well as talk ; not a monologist like Macaulay, who used to fill the room “knee-deep” with information once he was started.



MRS. GLADSTONE.

(From a photograph by the London Stereoscopic Company.)

His capacity for being interested in an immense variety of subjects is no doubt a chief cause of the elasticity of Mr. Gladstone's mind—that and his power of concentrating himself wholly for the time being on the subject in hand. This latter quality, perhaps the most effective that an intellect can possess, he corrects to some extent, when it threatens to carry him too far, by keeping three books in reading at the same time, that he may rest his mind by turning from one to the other. Great as his intellect is, it would not have accomplished half so much had he not husbanded its strength, as well as his physical energies, by the most rigid method. He has his will so trained that when he lies down to rest he can clear his mind of every pre-occupation and go straight to sleep. “In the most exciting political crisis,” he said once, “I dismiss current matters entirely from my mind when I go to bed, and will not think of them till I get up in the morning. I told Bright this, and he said, ‘That’s all very well for you, but my way is exactly the reverse. I think over all my speeches in bed.’” He regretted once that “Bright did nothing he should do to preserve his health, but everything that he should not.” His own allowance of sleep is seven hours. “I should like to have eight,” he says; “but one can do everything by habit, and when I have had my seven hours’ sleep, my habit is to get up.” Exercise he takes with the same deliberation. Until within the past few years, his favourite form of exercise was cutting down trees in the woods and park of Hawarden. Stripped to shirt and trousers, plying his axe with vigorous strokes upon some ancient and decaying tree, he was a picturesque and striking figure whose suggestiveness the nation was not slow to detect. In such a guise he was depicted in many an admiring cartoon which showed him applying the axe of reform to hoary

abuses. The axe became a symbol, and Mrs. Gladstone derived quite an income for her village orphanage by selling to hero-worshippers the chips which it had cut from Hawarden trees. In many a cottage to-day such a chip is treasured as a family heirloom. There are pretty stories told of Mr. Gladstone, surrounded by the evidences of his axe's prowess, his brow covered with honest sweat, being taken for a fellow-workman by some passing labourer or artisan, and submitting meekly to criticism and instruction in his craft without revealing his identity.

But no precaution for the husbanding of his health or the conservation of his intellectual energies would have been of much avail without the co-operation of Mrs. Gladstone. This noble woman has been indeed a blessing to her husband. Her whole life has been one beautiful act of devotion to his interests. She has deemed it her duty to save him from every worry that could distract him from his great mission and to guard him from every avoidable risk, and undoubtedly to her, under Providence, is it due that he has given to his country for so long a period such undivided efforts. Nothing was more touching in recent years than to see Mrs. Gladstone night after night, often the sole occupant of the Ladies' Gallery, watching anxiously, into the small hours of the morning, the white-haired figure below. Whenever he was going to deliver a great speech it was Mr. Gladstone's habit, after the period when his voice had begun to fail, to bring down with him in a sort of pomatum bottle—which afforded much material to the paragraphists—a preparation of egg and sherry to be drunk during the course of the speech; on these occasions it was also his custom to appear with a flower in his buttonhole. The House was aware by whose hands he was thus bedecked and fortified, and the knowledge added a grace as well as a pathos to these tokens

of love and solicitude. Mr. Gladstone might truly say with Edmund Burke during his wife's lifetime, that all care left him the moment he entered his home. To see him at his



MR. HERBERT GLADSTONE, M.P.

best—certainly at his happiest—is to see him at Hawarden in the midst of his family, which is now a family of three generations. There in his library, which looks out upon the bracken and the turf, upon the great trees, the terrace and

the soft lawns of the stately old place, he is at perfect peace. This library is at once his work-room and his haven of rest. Around the walls is an ingenious arrangement of shelves, his own invention, by which he is able to cram an incredible number of books into a limited space. In a prominent place hangs an illuminated text: "Thy God hath sent forth strength for thee." The text that hangs in his bedroom, it may be interesting to mention, is "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

Instinctively, as by a touch of nature, the people seem to have been drawn to Hawarden by the spectacle of noble living and Christian family life there presented. It has for a long time been customary for people in various parts of the country to organise excursions, or pilgrimages, to Hawarden, and the dearest wish of these admirers is gratified if the "Grand Old Man*" with his wife will show himself to them, and if, as sometimes happens at the prompting of Mrs. Gladstone, he will even address to them a few words. Sometimes, of late, the scene has been further brightened by the presence of Mr. Gladstone's little granddaughter, Dorothy Drew. An eye-witness thus describes one of these occasions:—

A space immediately opposite the centre walk from the house was roped off for Mr. Gladstone and his party. A few ladies had already taken their seats on the wall and on chairs within this enclosure, when, like a little bird, Dorothy Drew came dancing along from the castle. When the immense crowd in the field below caught sight of her they cheered loudly. Evidently she is well accustomed to 'being received,' for she danced up to the wall and stood smiling

* The origin of the appellation "Grand Old Man," as applied to Mr. Gladstone, is a matter of some obscurity. Mr. Lucy gives the credit of its invention to Sir William Harcourt, who used it in a speech to his constituents in Derby during that exultant period which followed the Liberal triumph of 1880. Among the inner circle of his official colleagues Mr. Gladstone was generally referred to as "Mr. G."

with the most perfect self-possession. She is only a tiny mite, and was very simply dressed in a pink print frock and a white washing hat. . . . When her grandfather alluded so prettily to her in his speech, Mrs. Gladstone lifted her up on the wall beside him, where they stood hand in hand, while the crowd cheered themselves hoarse. It was a pretty sight. The old man's face glowed with pride, while he bent down and told her to kiss her hand to the people.

The softening influence which accompanies and emanates from old age had, before Mr. Gladstone's retirement, as we have seen, begun to make an impression even upon the unquiet atmosphere of the House of Commons. The Parliamentary chroniclers, chief among them Mr. Lucy and Mr. T. P. O'Connor, bear abundant witness to the fact that, during his later sessions, Mr. Gladstone—whose gifts of oratory and leadership had never shone more brilliantly—was regarded with a new and tender sentiment by both foes and friends. Tories, says Mr. Lucy, used to listen to him "with rapt, almost reverent, attention." During those later sessions he was indeed the "Grand Old Man" of the House of Commons; and the feeling of the House of Commons but reflected the feeling which had begun to take hold of the nation at large. To few men has it been given to have aroused during a strenuous life such fierce animosities, and to have lived to see those animosities extinguished and the evening of his days attended by universal honour and the unalloyed regard of his countrymen.

THE END.

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